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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the challenges the future will bring to English teachers, this journal issue contains 24 articles dealing with a variety of philosophical and pedagogical topics. Article titles and authors are (1) "The End of Us: 1986" (R. E. Stratton); (2) "2082: A College Speaking Course" (C. Yetman); (3) "Competing with the Mass Media" (M. Keiffer); (4) "A Practical Look at Relative Readability" (J. D. Shields); (5) "The Language of Accusation" (F. C. Lewis); (6) "The High Cost of Textbooks" (G. Hullman); (7) "Some Needed Changes" (R. Qualls); (8) "Burnout: Encounter and Escape" (R. Larsen); (9) "Teachers and Learning" (S. Monhollen); (10) "Why Is It That When People Ask Me What I Do for a Living, I Tell Them I Work for the Phone Company?" (E. P. Feldstein); (11) "Let's Help Johnny" (M. Valverde); (12) "Native American Students in the English Classroom" (D. G. Winchell); (13) "Basic Competency Skills in Prospective Teachers" (J. Streitmatter and S. Padgett); (14) "Removing the Bore Barrier" (D. Reed); (15) "What I've Learned from Teachers" (K. Duggan); (16) "Not by Scientific Technology Alone" (E. E. Seittelman); (17) "How Adolescents React to Change: Selected Examples from Literature" (O. Osa); (18) "Making Literature Relevant" (B. Killian); (19) "Reflections on Wordsworth and Byron" (W. H. Butler); (20) "Developing Critical Thinking through Writing" (L. A. Fritz); (21) "Perspectives on Conferences and the Writing Process" (K. W. Lampert, D. C. Schaberg, and M. L. Faigen); (22) "The Beginnings of Talent: Case in Point" (A. G. Brand); (23) "Rediscovering the Forgotten, the Familiar" (C. E. Cannady); and (24) "Another Journey through the Looking Glass: New Lenses for Old Problems" (J. S. Mayher). (FL)

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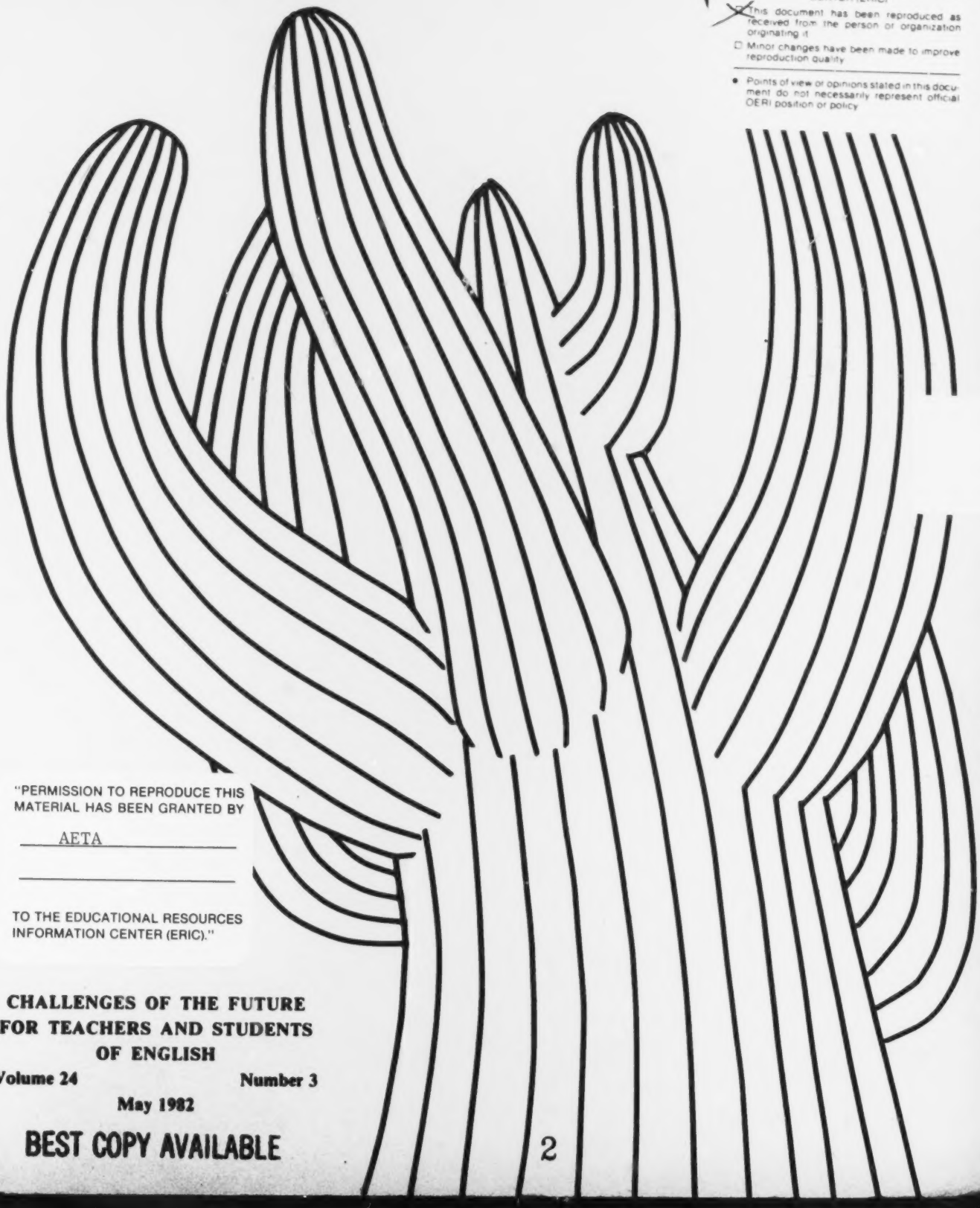

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CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF ENGLISH

Volume 24 **Number 3**

May 1982

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ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN - - A Member of the NCTE Exchange Agreement

The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN is a publication of the Arizona English Teachers Association, a nonprofit state afffiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN exists to create effective statewide articulation of English teachers at all levels, to increase awareness of new ideas, programs, and movements in English, and to improve instruction at every level.

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The topics and deadlines for the 1982-1983 issues are as follows:

October: "Writing Projects: Growth and Outgrowth" (August 1)
February: "Reading, Writing, and Adolescents" (December 1)
April: "Teaching Language Creatively" (February 1)

AEB welcomes manuscripts on these or other topics of interest to teachers of English and language arts at all levels. Manuscripts should be limited to 10-12 double-spaced pages; footnotes should be kept to a minimum and typed following the text. Use the MLA Style Sheet for footnote and bibliography form. The editor reserves the right to make minor textual changes in the interest of clarity or space limitation. Send manuscripts to

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NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing, 1981

High School Seniors Recommended for College Scholarships in 1982

The National Council of Teachers of English recognizes and commends the student finalists in the 1981 Achievement Awards in Writing Program. Created in 1957, the program publicly honors outstanding high school students of English and recommends them to colleges and universities for admission and scholarship aid. The awards were first presented to the finalists and their teachers in 1958. The young writers named here have demonstrated once again that excellence in writing exists despite the present criticism and controversy over the "crisis in writing" and the "decline" in American education.

ARIZONA FINALISTS

Charles David Andresen, Central High School, Phoenix

Leslie Durboraw, Chaparral High School, Scottsdale

Ellen K. Jones, Westwood High School, Mesa

Frank Allen Lea, Tempe Union High School, Tempe

John Joseph Moehringer, Saguaro High School, Scottsdale

David Poppe, Chaparral High School, Scottsdale

Nancy Redman, Teleteaching, Tucson Unified School District, Tucson

Tamara J. Stevens, Saguaro High School, Scottsdale

Sharon Anne Van Epps, Saguaro High School, Scottsdale

Brenda R. Weber, Westwood High School, Mesa

Nancy Marie Williams, Santa Rita High School, Tucson

State Coordinator: Beverly Merrill, 2049 E. Riviera, Tempe 85282

FROM THE EDITOR

What are the challenges of the future for teachers and students of English? That depends, of course, on one's vision of what the future will bring. Will computers invade education? Will books become obsolete? Will programmed learning at a distance replace the interaction of the classroom? Will our curricula reflect practical skills and abandon the humanities? Or will we be freed to teach more high-level skills when word processors take over spelling and mechanics for us?

If Russ Stratton's vision of 1986 in the lead article turns out to be accurate, we may have no future, and the challenges will evaporate. It's a disturbing picture, and there's enough of it already visible to cause us all some uneasiness.

Most of the other articles, however, envision a future not radically different from the present and predict that its challenges will be those we already face: accommodating students' needs within the educational system, fighting boredom and burnout, discovering anew the relevance of literature and the power of language. Whatever new challenges may be thrust upon us, these are unlikely to change.

Although the challenges may be the same, our ways of meeting them need not be, as John Mayher reminds us in the concluding article. If we've been looking at problems through the wrong end of a lens, then simply turning it around may cause the whole picture to come into focus. For example, we teachers tend to see things from a teacher's point of view. But what about those people at the other end of the lens--our students? How do they see the same things?

One challenge for me, as editor of this issue, was to discover just what students do think are the challenges we jointly face. Since the theme specified both teachers and students, it seemed only fair to include opinions from both sources. The AETA Executive Board agreed and gave me the go-ahead to solicit articles from students. We decided that it might also have the beneficial side effect of providing them with a real audience to write to on a subject of direct concern to them.

So last December I sent out to all individual AETA members a "call for papers" by students, dealing with the theme of this issue: Challenges of the Future for Teachers and Students of English. I felt sure that the response generated by this stimulus would be interesting.

And it was interesting. Although I didn't receive as wide a sampling of papers as I would have liked, those that I did get were thoughtful, well-written, and provocative.[1]

They were also in many cases dismayingly candid. You will find a number of them among the other articles in the body of this issue. But since I couldn't include nearly all I would have liked to, let me share with you here some of the comments from them that I found challenging.

First of all--is this a surprise?--students don't like English very much:

> *"The biggest problem facing English teachers is the struggle to keep the students interested."*
>
> *"One of the biggest challenges facing the students in high school English is to stay awake during classes."*
>
> *"The only thing that could make an English class more boring is if it was to be held seven days a week."*
>
> One student titled his paper *"English Made Bearable."*

These students are not without imagination, however, and they do have a command of the resources of exaggeration, understatement, and irony. Here is another example:

> *"You won't apply words like transitive, preposition, participle, etc. to everyday language, but just knowing all that big talk does one thing for you. When you are reading a passage, you can stop at a word and say, 'Wow! There's a verb!'"*

What makes English so boring to students? One answer, at least according to this limited sample, is all too often the teachers:

> *"Many students don't have enough self-motivation. This is why it's extremely important for the educator to make the material interesting."*

[1] I thank the following teachers particularly for their cooperation: Joyce Kinkead, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS; Donna L. Pierce, Washington High School, Phoenix, AZ; and Cheryl Lockhart, Amphitheater High School, Tucson, AZ.

"Only a small percentage of students honestly want to learn by the time they reach high school. The problem is partly due to teachers who have failed to reach the students and stimulate their minds to question."

"If more teachers would present excitingly interesting and mentally stimulating lessons, more students would throw away their notes and swallow their spitballs."

"It's amazing how ignorant our teachers can be. It doesn't take a genius to realize that what we need is a bit of personal attention, a show of concern, honesty, and a glimpse at how all this given information can be put into daily use."

Is this beginning to get painful? Well, we blame students, don't we?

Perhaps even worse than boredom is the negative effect teachers can have on their students' attitudes:

"What angers me most is that many of the teachers I had hated teaching. They made sure all their students knew it too. The only result they ended up getting from us was resentment. It was not our fault they were teachers and were not rich. I began to believe that all teachers were against teaching and hated kids. I feared many of my teachers and was often afraid to ask questions. I have always been filled with questions, and many of my teachers put me down for it. I still am fearful of asking questions."

"It is therefore a shame when an individual who shows promise as a writer and who perhaps may have the 'gift' which makes an outstanding writer, has his desire to learn snuffed out by an uncaring teacher who only desired a quiet classroom."

"I had written an assignment about my family; the paper was returned with only one marking: BORING."

There were positive comments about teachers too (thank goodness). Here is one of the best:

"I'm lucky this year. My teacher is the teacher that should be one. She enjoys teaching us, and when she doesn't know the answer, she doesn't just ignore it; she asks another teacher. She takes time to answer our questions, and she tries to make difficult things easier by giving us her opinion."

May we all have students who feel that way about us--at least sometimes.

Regarding curriculum and related matters, the students also had

much to say. Here is a student whose opinion I have heard expressed many times, but most often by other teachers:

> *"Every year the major portion of the school's budget goes to the exact same causes . . . sports. It seems that the reason we are here, our education, has been completely ignored."*

Another one, perhaps unconsciously taking up the sports metaphor, comments,

> *"Education itself has diminished to a playing field for high scores."*

Repetition and lack of variety are common complaints:

> *"The challenges for the teacher should be not to teach their students the same things each year."*

> *"For the past three years my English classes have consisted of a grammar unit--nouns and verbs--writing assignments, such as essays and book reports, and vocabulary words, which is a weekly unit where the night before the quiz 20 words are memorized only to be forgotten twenty-four hours later. Each year I become more uninterested in this monotonous program."*

Notice how the student has begun with her experience directly enough, but has slipped into the impersonal passive voice when describing the impersonal vocabulary quiz routine.

Lack of sequence bothered several students:

> *"Not only did there seem to be a gap between junior high and high school, but also between each year of high school. For the past three years each teacher has expected something of me that I have no knowledge of."*

> *"The problem is primarily in grammar. The student learns one rule, and the next year he is told that rule is wrong. Either these rules for grammar change from year to year or the student is being taught incorrectly. The student must then face the problem of whether to accept the new rules or stick with the old ones. As of today I still am using the rules that I learned my freshman year only because I never understood what my other teachers were teaching."*

Students have definite opinions about literature also. Much as it

grieves me to report this, I'm afraid the following attitude is fairly widespread:

> *"During my sophomore year I was faced with the challenge of trying to comprehend the play JULIUS CAESAR. In my opinion, there is no student who at the age of 15 can get anything out of reading the play."*

Luckily, not everyone feels this way:

> *"And now we come to this year. I'm in a writing and grammar class. I miss the reading of classics as we had done in the past."*

Another student, however, finds no value in classics:

> *" . . . the material used dates back to a time with which today's students can not identify. . . . In order to gain a valuable education, students should have the opportunity to study material dealing with the present--not the past."*

The following recommendation is typical of many:

> *"The doing away with required reading books and going to a system of either recommended reading or free reading should come about. 3/4 of the students do not enjoy reading the books required of them only because the teacher had to read them when he was in school."*

Sometimes it isn't the material, but the method that's at fault:

> *"In a previous English class, we read the book TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD. Before, we had discussed the themes or concepts; then we were given a series of objective tests. One of the questions was 'What color were the spots on the dog?' I guess whenever I see a liver-spotted dog, I will remember that book."*

Students who are seniors are naturally concerned with their future; those who plan to attend college obviously realize the importance of a good background in English. This one thinks she has had good preparation from one of her teachers:

> *"During my third year in high school, in a college writing class, I learned to develop a style of writing. In almost a whole semester, my essays were brutally marked with the teacher's red pen; not the paper as a whole, but rather each sentence was criticized. Now I scrutinize each sentence as I write. Obviously style and technique are two character-*

istics of a good writer which evolve from careful analysis of a sentence. Developing the characteristics early helps the students throughout college."

Here is a less brutal suggestion for preparing students for college:

"It's the high school teacher's responsibility to get the student prepared for college; by not only giving them college type work but also letting them see films or go on tours of the college. The teacher might even discuss college, what it's actually about."

The following student has an idea what college could be about, at least in the area of language study:

"Once in college some interesting challenges would be to study the English language background: who first started to speak it, and where and how the grammar rules came to be. Since English is one of the hardest languages to learn, knowing how it came into being and why it is would make it easier to understand."

Not a bad suggestion for a high school curriculum either.

Well, like the Wife of Bath's, "this is a long preamble of a tale," but I want to leave you on a more positive note. The above examples and the essays included later show that students are capable of using language interestingly and creatively, even eloquently at times. They are capable of critical thought; they recognize their own weaknesses as well as those of their teachers and of the system. And while they have, unfortunately, too often not found English interesting or challenging, they know very well what it could and should be:

"Writing is not only a beautiful, educative art, but also an outlet for frustration and anxiety. Reading works differently, to inform students. Reading enlightens students about happenings around them. Books explain and illustrate minds of other writers and various worlds outside the student's own small world. Reading broadens the mind, while writing uses the mind."

That's well said.

I can't think of a better way to close than with the words of yet another student:

"Creativity and vast imagination lie behind the blank faces of students. Challenge us, make us think, let us be creative, and even corny! . . . make an atmosphere where everyone is involved and everyone comes out of class with a better understanding of the English language and how to use it."

Margaret Fleming

CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF ENGLISH

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THE END OF US: 1986

Russell Edgar Stratton

We have seen the future, and we are not part of it; the future of education, that is, for it lies not with the universities and their students but instead with big business and its clients, clients prepared carefully in advance, their needs this-worldly, predisposed to certain methods of satisfaction. These clients, the consumers in an impending new technocracy, are your children and mine, so we should reflect upon them first and last.

At a meeting of college and university teachers of English a few years ago, the favored leitmotiv, attempting to uncover root causes for the decline in students' literacy, specifically in composition skills, was replayed. Some attempted then to direct the group's attention to the role of television in undermining these skills, but most of the responses indicated that teachers guessed students did not watch much TV because of academic pressures. What was not considered, however, was that they had in previous years spent enormous amounts of time, maybe four or five hours per day, glued to the tube: without much statistical competence, I calculate charitably that this computes to something approximating one day in six, one-sixth of a child's life! They were prepared.

It is not, however, my purpose to indict TV: that has been attempted often (and always unsuccessfully) before. What concerns me more is the proliferation within the last few years of computerized entertainment in the form of electronic games. The TV watchers are ripe for this form of enrichment: when you are away from the tube, you can often find a game—they abound in gas stations, mini-marts, fast-food eateries, and in their own arcades, in the smallest villages across the land—or even take the game with you, since many are now portable and inexpensive. They are fun. I just heard about one from our own TV room: "the learning machine (beep beep)—to help give your child a head start in the world." Indeed. They also involve a certain amount of hand-eye coordination, the source of much merriment in bars. And occasionally they require intelligence: once I defeated a computer at a very low-level chess game, and afterwards I felt a great sense of accomplishment, particularly when the CRT display read, "You win. Congratulations." I refused its offer to play again, but I fear that our children will not refuse. Trained by TV marathons, they will keep playing until those tokens (real money gets changed into slugs in a more-than-symbolic procedure) run out, if payment is required at all.

And they will be encouoraged, no question of that: the largest corporations in this country are presently experimenting with education by micro-computers. Two-year programs exist and will soon be expanded. Even the teaching of composition skills, literacy itself, will become the province of electronics. Academics involved in such programs notice that occasionally the computer delivers a brilliant result but most often its comments are pedestrian or even nonsensical. On another but similar level, I once wrote a haiku for a computer, inspired by an all-college effort to "educate" faculty. The machine kept spitting back one line because it had "too many syllables," too many because the past tense dental suffix "ed" was counted as one

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Russell Edgar Stratton is Chairman of the English Department at Peru State College, Peru, Nebraska.

syllable, no exceptions allowed (make that allow-ed, see?). That the machine will eventually overcome such problems is certain; it may even succeed in larger composition skills. Surely its users will not be lacking, for soon, very soon, these great business corporations will be past the experimental stages: they will move to market micro-computers, with the consequent software, from coast to coast, so that every little town with its present Gorf game will soon have also its very own access to a master education computer in a large city hundreds of miles away. Pay a fee, press a button, and—instant education. The debut is imminent.

If all this sounds a bit far-fetched, consider some economics involved: the budget for all advertising in the U.S. in 1975 was approximately the same (in Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television by Jerry Mander), $25 billion, as the amount spent that year on all of higher education. That was six years ago. Present statistics must be even more appalling, revealing that in the business world there is no limit to funding, and that when large companies speak of "marketing" they mean investing huge sums to push their products upon a public already receptive to them because of past experience, past brainwashing.

What are some of the implications for education? Consider first the library, a source of pride on many campuses, occasionally even utilized on others. If a computer chip the size of your thumbnail, fabricated basically from common beach sand, can store an entire volume (or several), then whole collections will be contained in a fraction of the space presently needed. Students, moreover, will not even enter the building any longer: they will simply enter the system via a remote terminal. What will become of books as we know them? At first they will be preserved, but as time, not much of it, passes, those in charge will recognize that none are used, that the space could be better employed for more learning machines, and that anyhow, everything new is being "written" directly into the computeer, programmed in one of the new languages. Anyone who has used the microfilm reader knows something about this scenario: sitting in a darkened room, reading over a copy of a rare medieval manuscript, one manages to perceive some information, but a total impression is lacking: the notes are on the page, but the music remains silent. Think of an education where everything becomes reduced to a CRT readout. Books will vanish.

Consider the classroom, devoid of teachers, instead populated by a "facilitator" and his consoles. What sort of human contact will occur when all questions are answered for a passive student sitting in the dark by a "response" from the tube? What will be the result of lectures delivered in absentia, canned and marketed cunningly, step-by-step, in order to coordinate themselves with the computerized replies students will elicit when they are permitted to enter their "questions"? If there are any questions, that is.

And consider the arts, first of all on a basic level. What need would there be for printing or graphics if everything were programmed? Gradually these skills will disappear. More important, what of the creative arts? I have friends in a large southern city who treated me to future shock a few months ago via their new toy, a player grand piano, capable of reproducing, for example, the Chopin waltzes, precisely as played by Rubinstein, taken from a casette and fed into a micro-computer within the piano. Across the enormous living room came the unmistakable technique, but seated at the keyboard was a six-year-old child! When I learned their secret, I felt very naive indeed.

Perhaps we should feel grateful for technology's contributions to the creative arts. The chance to watch opera, for example, is a marvelous cultural experience not

normally associated with the southeast corner of Nebraska. And yet, I have noticed, there is a tendency to hype the occasion, as with two recent performances where film was shot on location, voices dubbed in later, yielding results curiously plastic and unsatisfying: the singers were't really singing. Perhaps in the future a Met audience may upon being seated witness an entirely electronic performance of Aida, recreated on a gigantic tube, supported by an electronic orchestra conducted by—I don't even want to speculate about that. And the whole affair will be done on the cheap: that is important. On all levels the computer is cheaper than what we are about now. Those chips can be produced and reproduced for less and less, resulting in a technology that will undersell education dramatically.

We are expensive, we teachers—and inefficient. Our campuses, buildings, administrative staffs and allied personnel all mount up: and as everyone realizes, we become more expensive every year. Contrast this extravagance with the economical and efficient machine, promoted with marketing know-how already proven and honed by experience in TV advertising and mass-production of electronic gamery, and you will rapidly comprehend what the future holds for us in higher education: oh, yes, the Princetons and a few others may survive, although not unaffected; but even they will become dinosaurs, representing the way things used to be—before the problem was solved. As for the rest of us, some will be "freed" to perform other, vital tasks; some had better look about quickly for alternatives, at a time when the diploma elite may not be in great demand; but most will face a comfortable existence in a world where we are spared the responsibilities of being fully human.

Perhaps we deserve this future since long ago we relinquished control over the educational system. What worries me even more, however, is the product to be turned out by the new technocracy: computer zombies, cloned coneheads, our children hebetated by a lack of human contact, passing from a cradle by a TV set to an adolescence crouched over a game, thence to four years seated before a CRT, on to a business career, again largely dictated by technology, and finally to an easeful death, maybe with headphones playing something appropriately comforting, passive. There will be no leavening period, no interim for higher education, not even the few years now, nothing resembling the humanities as we know them, only unrelieved cybernetics. The ghastly coda to this movement, that already computers are being programmed to speak, might have been expected. Orwell was indeed a pessimist: he should have called it 1986.

METAPHOR CONFERENCE AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

DATE: MARCH 31 TO APRIL 2, 1983

THEME: FARFETCHED FIGURES: THE HUMOR OF LINGUISTIC DEVIANCE

SPONSOR: WESTERN HUMOR AND IRONY MEMBERSHIP (WHIM)

WRITE: DON L. F. NILSEN
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
TEMPE, AZ 85287

2082: A COLLEGE SPEAKING COURSE

Christopher Yetman

As the century progresses and the human race becomes firmly entrenched in the computer age, we will see a greater emphasis on spoken language and a lessening of the importance of written language. Most computers will be fitted with voice synthesizers, and the common man will have little or no use for the written word. Only the highly technical fields will have the need for written information, and this will usually be in the form of mathematical symbols rather than words.

With little or no need for the written word, few will actually know how to read or write. English classes will be classes in speech rather than composition. The subtleties of vocabulary and grammar will be stressed, rather than spelling and punctuation. As speaking will be the only way to communicate to the masses, those with a knack for speaking will have more power than those who might have a flair for writing, and so schools where the pupils learn speaking techniques might become prevalent.

Finally, since there will be little or no written items passed down from generation to generation, the English language will be more susceptible to changes, and contemporary word uses will be more likely to be absorbed into the language. Thus, our language will evolve much more quickly than a language that has many written records. English teachers, rather than teaching old-style English, would teach the current word usage to their pupils.

Christopher Yetman is a student at Amphitheater High School, Tucson, Arizona.

COMPETING WITH THE MASS MEDIA

Michael Keiffer

Teaching is one of the toughest occupations around. Climbing Mt. Everest appears easier at times. With new technology available in the field of education, it would seem that teaching, as well as learning, would become a less arduous task. As we move into the next decade, however, both teachers and students are not finding this to be so.

Teachers often complain about their students' passivity, short attention spans, and lack of imagination. Classroom activities and academic pursuits do not seem to motivate students. These characteristics are attributable, in part, to television viewing. By the age of 15, the average American student has already spent approximately 20,000 hours in front of the set, far more time than he or she has spent in a classroom. During the school year, some 1.5 million students are still watching television at midnight on weeknights.

Researchers generally agree that heavy viewers comprehend less of what they read than those who view television only occasionally. They also confirm that, other factors being equal, the more television a child watches, the worse he or she is likely to do in school. Gifted grammar school students show a marked drop in creative abilities after just three weeks of intense television viewing. In a real sense, television viewing can act as a major deterrent to learning.

Technological advances in the media have only increased its popularity and offer the student an appealing alternative to activities which are not as entertaining and require more effort. Cable television, video games, and more sophisticated equipment are keeping students glued to their sets for longer and longer periods of time.

In the classroom itself, television can aid in some types of learning. Educators seem to agree that certain televised lessons can eliminate the need for repetitious reading drills, can improve reading skills, and can be useful in teaching vocabulary and grammar.

The use of scripts from popular television shows as a teaching tool—a controversial practice known as "scripting"—has reportedly raised average reading levels in some Philadelphia schools by some 20 percent. However, it may also, in the process, have legitimized the misinformation or stereotypes inherent in some television programs.

Other forms of the media are also responsible for the students' general lack of interest in school. Students between the ages of 12 and 20 account for nearly half of all movie admissions. Many filmmakers push movies that will appeal to a younger audience to cash in on this lucrative market. The gore movies like "Friday the 13th" appeal to the young movie goer and push out films which may be of a better quality. This is yet another activity that competes for the students' time and keeps them away from the textbooks.

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For young people moving into adolescence, radio and magazines assume increasing importance. According to studies by marketing experts, the average teen listens to the radio nearly three hours a day. During peak listening times, teens, who comprise 12 percent of the U.S. population, make up 15 percent of the audience. Magazines designed for preteens and teens have surprisingly large circulations. For American Girl, Coed, Glamour, and Seventeen, the figure is between 1 and 3 million each. While students claim they can read or study while listening to music, the temptation is to give less than full attention to those studies. Perhaps magazines are replacing novels when it comes to a choice of reading material.

All forms of media have a significant effect on students, and there is every reason to believe this effect will increase rather than decrease in the future. Television, radio, and movies will continue to grow in audience and popularity as technology continues to advance and offer even more possibilities. The classroom offers a less exciting and entertaining atmosphere as a rule. Reading, studying, and learning require a great deal more effort than kicking back to watch television. Students who are watching too many hours of television or who are listenting to the radio hours on end are not likely to be spending very much time doing homework.

Teachers must work harder at getting the attention of students. They must insist that students pay attention and develop methods to insure that they will. Teachers must devise better motivational techniques to combat those short attention spans and wandering minds. **If the teacher's job seems to be getting tougher, it isn't much easier for the student.**

Students must exercise more self-discipline. They must battle a variety of distractions. Somehow students must understand that there is reward in learning; that discovering something for themselves through a process of thought and study can be enjoyable.

It seems that the media will continue to be one of the most difficult distractions to plague students and teachers in the future. If the current trend in the media continues, it is not likely that what is available will be educational or in support of the learning process. Apparently, it will be up to the educational system and educators to find ways to use the media to their advantage, rather than compete against it.

NCTE

TEACHERS OF ENGLISH PASS RESOLUTIONS

Members of the National Council of Teachers of English, at their annual business meeting last November 22, in Boston, passed resolutions on several current issues in education. They voiced their belief that the courts, in ruling on cases, should avoid spelling out specifics of curriculum for the schools. They declared their opposition to dissolution of the federal Department of Education, and they reaffirmed their long-time stand against censorship of school materials.

A PRACTICAL LOOK AT RELATIVE READABILITY

Joel D. Shields

When I first encountered Hirsch's term "relative readability," my first question was "Relative to what or to whom?" "Readability" didn't make much sense either. However, in his new book, The Philosophy of Composition, E.D. Hirsch introduces and explores the concept of "relative readability" and explains his term thus:

> Readability' refers to the easiness with which a reader understands a text, while "relative" explicitly concedes the fact that easiness must vary with different semantic intentions." (1)

But could one apply a variation of a "relative readability" concept to, say, current periodicals and freshman composition essays and produce some evidence that concrete language plays a substantial role in the "relative readability" in student essays? I found that such a conceptual variation seemed to accomplish this task.

I chose two popular periodicals, Playboy and Cosmopolitan, plus a student essay that had received a grade of "C." I chose these two periodicals on the basis of my interviews with local bookstore merchants. I asked them for the name of their top selling women's magazine and men's magazine. Their response was unanimous. Women apparently buy Cosmopolitan more than, say, Vogue, and men prefer Playboy to a close competitor, Penthouse. Keeping my goal of student anonymity in mind, I decided against using a student essay from one of my classes. Instead, I chose an anonymous student essay from D'Angelo's Teacher's Manual. Although the published essay received a lesser grade from D'Angelo, I gave it a "C."

Another problem, however, remained. Since the "easiness must vary with different semantic intentions,"(2) I chose to make that factor a constant in my analysis. That is, all three concerned themselves with searches—searches that concerned themselves with the fulfillment of common human needs. Cosmopolitan, for example, focused on the establishment of healthy, opposite-sex relationships, while the student essay examined various antidotes for loneliness. Playboy concentrated on the search for sex. Furthermore, in order to evaluate the three sources, I chose two analytic tools: sophistication and reading-ease. But these terms could easily be a very subjective judgement. In order to be more objective, I utilized two formulas in my analysis. The first, the Fry Readability Formula, was especially helpful in determining the relative state of my first variable, sophistication. The second formula, the Flesch Reading-Ease Formula, was especially pertinent to my second factor—reading ease. With these tools in hand, I set out to explore this particular variation of "relative readability" in the world of periodicals and student essays.

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Before I explore the results, I'd like first to further define my two variables: sophistication and reading ease. Because sophistication in writing is relative to its audience, the term must be accurately defined. Sophistication is based, in part, on average levels of authorial skill in areas such as vocabulary, syntax, and diction. Up to a point, of course, the level of skill or sophistication varies. These different levels of skill are assigned the grade levels 1-12 and on into college. In this study, then, I used the already established grade levels to indicate the particular level of authorial sophistication. The second variable, reading ease,was used to indicate the probable ease or difficulty that the reader encountered when faced with (in this case) an article or essay.

The results were interesting. Using the realm of human relationships as the constant among the periodicals and essay, I found that the student essay was equally as sophisticated as the Playboy article. That is, they were both calculated to place in the ninth-grade level on the Fry Graph. Cosmopolitan, however, scored in the seventh-grade level of sophistication. Why the discrepancy in the levels? It probably occurred for reasons of commercial concern. That is, in order to reach a greater audience, the Cosmopolitan editors probably accepted this particular essay for its level of sophistication. In short, the lower the sophistication, the greater the readership. This, of course doesn't imply that many adults would eagerly read an article of second-grade level. It merely indicates that the seventh-grade level is probably a fairly effective level on which to communicate to a general audience. Flesch supports the above with a few statements on literary style:

> If you want to widen your audience and reach readers with less education, you'll have to simplify your style.

Furthermore, he states that

> If you don't carry simplification too far into primer style, your old readers will not only stay with you, but you'll get more of the same kind; . . .(4)

Sophistication, however, is just half the analytical picture. The other half, the reading-ease variable, suggests some interesting phenomena. Using the Flesch Reading-ease Formula and utilizing his 0-100 scale, (0 being unreadable and 100 the most readable), I found that Cosmopolitan rated a score of 72.2, making it the most readable of the three. Playboy and the student essay scored significantly lower, with scores of 62.7 and 62.1, respectively. The reading-ease of a piece of work, then seems to have an inverse relationship with its level of sophistication. This is obvious enough. But what are the reasons behind these discrepancies between measured sophistication and reading ease?

The most obvious reason that accounted for these differences was the syllabic count of each word. For example, Cosmopolitan had an average of 1.41 syllables per word, Playboy 1.47, and the student essay 1.53 syllables per word. In other words, the more syllables per word, the greater the level of sophistication. Since the student essay was the most sophisticated of the three*, the syllabic count was as follows:

> Sentence 1 - 22 syllables
> Sentence 2 - 21 syllables

The most readable of the three, Cosmopolitan, had the following syllabic count:

Sentence 1 - 31 syllables
Sentence 2 - 30 syllables.

In this sample, Cosmopolitan, with its greater syllabic content appears to be the more sophisticated. However, the evidence thus far seems to confirm the opposite. Why the difference? The answer appears to be in sentence uniformity. While the student essay was generally uniform in syllables per sentence, throughout its length, Cosmopolitan had greater variety in sentence length. More specifically, the somewhat monotonous student essay revealed an approximate, but uniform, 20-syllable-per-sentence structure, while Cosmopolitan fluctuated from, say,a thirty-syllable sentence to a three-syllable one. It should be clear now, however, that syllabic count is not the only force at work in determining the sophistication and reading-ease of literary work. Sentence length is yet another factor and will presently be examined in greater detail.

If there is a combination of short and long sentences within a literary work, the reader tends to become interested and to stay interested. Hodges stresses the importance of variety in sentence length:

> Vary the structure and the length of your sentences to make your whole composition pleasing and effective.

As an example of this concept, consider the following sentences from Playboy:

> Los Angeles is the city that sex built. (8 words) And it is a testament to the sexual myth that draws men and women still. (15 words)

Assuming that the variety of sentence length, (and not the subject matter) is the sign of sophistication above, a striking contrast can be perceived by the following pair of student sentences:

> "The victims of loneliness must use the eyes of Argus when choosing his environment habitat. (15 words) He should try to find a location in midst a mass of extroverts."(7) (13 words)

Clearly, the student essay has a tendency towards monotony. But why do freshman students, at least in this analysis, tend to write sophisticated yet monotonous essays? I believe it is fear. From my experience as an instructor, I've noticed that **once a student learns to polish his complete but simple sentences, he tends desperately to hold on to his structure.** He is not about to experiment with compound, compound-complex sentences unless he is assured that his experiemntation will not affect his grades. But stretching for variety brings its own rewards. Consider the following passage as an analogy to the art of writing:

> "Most gulls don't bother to learn more than the simplest facts of flight - how to get from shore to food and back again. For most gulls, it is not flying that matters, but eating. For this gull, though, it was not eating that mattered, but flight." (8)

Unfortunately, the safe and secure position is often the most readable — and at the very least tiring to the reader. Sentence variety appears to be an important factor in reading ease. But what effect does the diction in these sentences, especially concrete language, have on the sophistication and reading ease of an article or essay?

Concrete language is a useful literary tool. It appears to function as a reality-orienting device. That is, concrete language touches the reader with easily recognizable symbols, symbols that are most familiar to the reader. For example, it seems easier to digest the term "you" than it is to visualize "reader." It seems much easier and faster to visualize "a St. Bernard" than "a four-legged domesticated animal." Specific concrete language reminds the reader of his reality more readily than abstract, symbolic diction. "Love" for example, takes more time and is more difficult to understand, then say, "a kiss." Concrete language then, is more immediate and pertinent to the reader. It should be no surprise then, that the sophistication of the three afore-mentioned literary subjects increases when the abstractions appear. Furthermore, as the language becomes more abstract, the reader is further removed from his immediate operating level. Conversely, as the use of concrete language increases, the reading ease increases as well. Again, the inverse relationship between sophistication and reading ease is apparent. The two articles and essay appear to support this concept. Cosmopolitan was rated earlier as lowest in sophistication but highest in reading ease. Does Cosmopolitan use a great deal of concrete language? Yes. In fact, 15% of the words used in the sample belonged in the concrete language category. Playboy, on the other hand, had only 10%, and the student essay, only 6%. It appears that concrete language is indeed a most potent element in the determination of both sophistication and reading ease in writing.

I made this study because "relative readability," in my opinion, was too abstract to be practically useful. In my opinion, a pragmatic variation of the term might be the answer. By holding semantic intentions as a constant so the practical results would not be affected by varying authorial intentions, I hoped to measure the relative communicative success of each article or essay. I measured this success in communication by using two variables: authorial sophistication and reading ease. I found that the results appeared to indicate that the student essay was equally sophisticated as one periodical. But both the essay and article lacked an element in which the remaining article abounded — reading ease. After noting the discrepancy, I found that the sophistication and reading ease were inversely proportional to one another. The reasons for this discrepancy were composed of four main elements: commercial concern, syllabic count, sentence variety, and concrete language. Certainly, the results seen here were not only still very subjective, but highly limited in their implications. My main concern was not to broadly define the term "relative readability' by use of a pragmatic instrument, but only to examine a small face of a multi-faceted concept.

NOTES

(1) E.D. Hirsch, The Philosophy of Composition (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 9.

(2) Hirsch, p. 9.

(3) Rudolf Flesch, The Art of Readable Writing (United States: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 147.

(4) Flesch, p. 147.

(5) John C. Hodges, Harbrace College Handbook (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977), p. 285.

(6) B. Farrell and P. McMillan, "Los Angeles," Playboy, Dec. 1979, p. 184.

(7) "How to Survive Loneliness," Process and Thought in Composition (United States: Winthrop Publishers, Inc., 1977), p. 21.

(8) Richard Bach, Jonathan Livingston Seagull (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), p. 14.

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KENNY AND CARL

The two letters that follow both arrived in the mail on the same day.

I.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing this letter to ask you to consider publishing an essay that I have written. I'm a 6th grader attending school at MacArthur Elementary (in Mesa, Arizona). I am enclosing a copy of my essay with this letter.

Sincerely,

Kenny Osorio

KENNY'S ESSAY

It was 10:30 at Bitburg, Germany Middle School and I was on the sandfield, which contained plenty of golden brown sand in it, playing football with my friends. We were in the middle of a play when Morrie Toy threw a long bomb to Robert Kirkland. He didn't throw it far enough and I made an interception. I started out running slow because my teammates were blocking some people who were trying to tackle me, but then I saw an opening and started trucking.

I thought I had made a sure touchdown when Johnnie Nelson, a five foot, five inch, 110 pound, hard-headed numbskull, jumped in front of me. You'd think we'd have a head-to-head collision but instead his head hit my tongue, smashing it. It ached a lot but I kept on running for a touchdown.

Suddenly my mouth rapidly started filling up with blood. My friend and I started scurrying to the nurse's office. When the nurse saw me she screamed so loud it's a miracle the windows didn't crack. With great swiftness she took me to the emergency room and they told me to sit down in a large, brown, uncomfortable chair. I was very tense. The doctor ran out for a second to get some tools. I quickly got out of the chair to look at myself in the mirror. Yuck! My face was covered with blood and so was my shirt. I went back in the seat and tried to relax. The doctor and nurse came back with a gigantic, sharp shot and a curved metal needle. First they gave me a shot. It felt like it went all the way through my tongue, and maybe it did but I was too frightened to ask.

Then the nurse stated, "When we start sewing you up you won't even feel it." I don't care what they said but that hurt! Stitch by stitch they sewed up my tongue. The painful torture was finally over. It seemed like hours but actually it only took three minutes!

I went through a lot of pain that day and I'll never forget it, so I vowed to be more careful and try not to get any more stitches; but I guess I can't keep promises, because only a couple of months later I cracked my head and it needed stitching, also.

II.

Margaret Fleming, Editor
English Department
University of Arizona

Regarding: ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN

Dear Margaret Fleming:

Recent work on a comprehensive perspective of writing instruction in the elementary and middle school has produced evidence of considerable promise. It is on the basis of the evidence that I inquire relative to the suitability of a manuscript about writing instruction.

In 1000 to 1500 words I can describe the basis of Developmental Writing and explore several exemplary classroom procedures that will be immediately teacher and learner useful. A Developmental Writing article will be a decided departure from "creative writing tips" and procedures for the development of composition skills.

I will be pleased to respond to your request for further information, outline, draft, or evidence. I appreciate your consideration of this inquiry.

Sincerely,

Carl N.

I couldn't help but be struck by the contrast. Kenny's letter is simple and direct. He states his purpose, provides information about himself, and encloses his essay. Carl, on the other hand is obscure. Although his letter is 5 times as long as Kenny's, he provides no information about himself and almost none about his topic, and while I think his purpose is to ask if I would like to see a copy of his article, I can't be sure even of that. Moreover, the sheer vagueness of his description of it gives me no basis on which to decide. "Composition instruction," "exemplary classroom procedures," "developmental writing," and a "comprehensive perspective" on all these! His most specific sentence, "In 1000 to 1500 words I can describe the basis of Developmental Writing," is belied by his ability to say almost nothing in 113 words. How could I respond to such a letter? Why should I?

If Carl's letter were an isolated example, it would not be worth talking about, but such language abounds. Florence Lewis's article, "The Language of Accusation," which follows, details a number of examples. Writing that way isn't automatic; it has to be learned. Although, as Orwell says, it may be easier, once you have mastered the trick, than to write directly and clearly.

The challenge to teachers, as I see it, is to keep Kenny writing, to help him retain the obvious pleasure he takes in recalling and shaping details of his experience this way, to build upon his clear sense of structure as it appears in his essay, so that he will enlarge his repertoire of writing modes and tasks, becoming able to write increasingly complex pieces, but without losing his grasp of detail, his capacity for vivid description.

Our challenge, in short, is to keep Kenny's writing from turning into Carl's.

Margaret Fleming

THE LANGUAGE OF ACCUSATION

Florence C. Lewis

"In the matter of non-re-employment", the letter of accusation begins. . ."I, _____, allege:" And the allegation follows: The allegation is a statement of fact. The party of the first part—the "I"—is the associate superintendent of public schools. "Allege," as I take the word to mean, is "to state or declare something under oath but without offering complete proof." One alleges, for example, that a banker is an embezzler or something. So how can one allege that one is the associate superintendent of schools unless one has some doubts about one's right to occupy such a position. And perhaps one should . . .if one is in charge of accusing people of non-re-employment.

The letter of accusation further alleges that the respondent "was at all times mentioned herein and now is a certificated employee of the District." Now, it is one thing to allege that a respondent is a certified employee because, once again, the word "allege" throws everything into fog—an associate superintendent who may not really be anything at all, a certified employee who may not really be certified. But what does the "was at all times mentioned herein" signify? Who mentioned whom? The passive voice submits the <u>each</u> of the respondents to a "designee" way up in the Superintendent's office who makes and files accusations in an official capacity and keeps mentioning each of the respondents at all times, as if he, the designee, were turning a prayer wheel. I guess.

Item V of the accusation states the crime. The order of termination among respondents is that they have "the same date of first rendering paid service." There it is. At last. All the lard in the would won't help it fry though. Oh, the accusation does try. I mean it does try to coat "lack of seniority" as the real reason for the accusation. It says things like: "By reason of reduction and discontinuance of particular kinds of services" so that it appears the cause for not re-employing respondents relates soley to the welfare of the schools and the pupils thereof, and these crumbs make a lot of sense. Choked on, they reveal that cutting particular kinds of service is good for the schools and the kids who run around "therein." You didn't know that, did you? But particular kinds of services have particular kinds of respondents, who first rendered paid service to the District on the same date or did not render paid service on a particular date, and so the order of termination is <u>not</u> based solely on seniority. See? So if a respondent was hired by the District before 1967, he's safe, even if he is incompetent. And if he was hired after 1967, he's not safe. See?

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the accusation or the alleged accusation or the pledge of allegiance or the declaration of senority, dated and signed this day of something or other but not in the year of our Lord—because he went into hiding.

Why does this document fill me with shame? I am ashamed that my district used the sum of one teacher's salary to mail this "goo" to 2100 people and the sum of another teacher's salary to send out preliminary "goo" notices to everybody in the

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district before it narrowed down the field to 2100. I am ashamed that I earn less than a scavenger after twenty-five years of teaching and that in an effort to keep others in employment, those poor souls who received the letters of accusation, I may be forced to take a 20% reduction in salary. I am ashamed that people who do not teach are deciding who must receive the accusations and the reductions. I am ashamed that my career and my salary should be judged by people who do not teach, who have perhaps escaped the classroom because they could not teach. I am ashamed that being a career teacher finally means I am a fool. I also am ashamed that the world I live in requires this antiseptic ooze to dismiss people legally. A simple post card would simply not stand up in court. Finally I am ashamed of slapping a dead duck . . . even though it quacks duckspeak. I am taking as the target for my frustration the language of this document, and it's like going after the rash of a disease when the disease is inside.

For the whole question of firing teachers solely on the basis of seniority makes me sick. The last hired, the first fired. The last hired are invariably young teachers, and minority teachers, but the real shame is that they are competent and alive while many who did not get their "accusations" are incompetent, and in some cases comatose. I am ashamed that we have no way of judging competency . . . not among our teachers, not among our administrators.

But this question of competence is one that assails us everywhere we turn. In California we can't even get BART to run, and its chief architect sits in Washington and advises other cities on how to "ruin" mass transit. And our Governor is so busy running for president we must leave notes on his desk when we come to call. And doctors have malpractice suits as never before. Everybody is incompetent.

But the schools are the official whipping boy.

And we can't look to the bottom of our illness. All we can do is look at the rash.

The language of the accusatory letter is finally, actually, dumb. But what else can it say? Where else can it go?

☆ ☆ ☆

SCHOOLTEACHER ***Bernard Gadd*** *has teamed up with American teacher and writer* ***Florence Lewis*** *to write and publish a slim collection of short stories called* Who Wants to be Lillian Plotnick's Mother?

The title comes from one of Florence Lewis' stories in which she draws on her own Jewish background to depict the anguish — and unintentional comedy — of the mother of a naked movie star (she says she knows the pain ***Henry Fonda*** *feels).*

Florence Lewis is not only known in her native California for her writings on teaching English but won the hearts of Australian and New Zealand teachers at the Sydney international English teaching conference last year with her lecture on ***George Orwell.***

Co-author Gadd is also an English teacher at South Auckland's Hillary College. This is his second collection of stories to appear in the same year, Heinemann having just brought out his Where to Go? *stories.*

Bernard Gadd is known for his attacks on School Certificate, as well as for writing verse.

The new book has just been launched on the American market and, as the word there and in this country gets around about it, he says he doesn't mind being ***Lillian Plotnick's*** *father.*

THE HIGH COST OF TEXTBOOKS

Gary Hullman

The enormous debt education owes to the printing press is common knowledge. Not only did the advent of printing facilitate the spread of literacy and cause books to become readily available to many at a relatively low cost, it allowed teachers to spend less time in communicating bare facts as well. Freed to a large extent of this most basic of duties, the teacher could begin to introduce the principles of rhetoric, composition, critical analysis, and dialectical argumentation to complement mere memorization. In other words, the teacher was able to impart, often for the first time, a knowledge and understanding of the more complex skills demanded if language is to be anything more than merely a means of the simplest expression. **The importance of books as pedagogical aids has not diminished** in the face of the development of mechanical and technological instruments of instruction, such as the tape recorder, movie projector, and television set, and it seems most unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future.

Education owes a debt to printing, but need it become publishing's slave? Since the beginning, publishers have found textbooks a lucrative commodity; the market for such books has increased dramatically since Gutenberg published his two dozen copies of Donatus's Latin Grammar. The existence of established public libraries may certainly help parents, teachers, and students defray the high costs of education, but the cost of libraries is, of course, borne by all, in the form of taxes.

Not only has the population increased vastly since the English founding of Jamestowne, but knowledge itself, due to the complexification of society, expands at exponential rates, almost annually. It is not vain, perhaps, to imagine that the future may well witness a time when traditional courses of study must of necessity be either greatly reduced in scope or abandoned altogether due to the rocketing costs of education — no small part of which is the ever-increasing cost of textbooks. It is quite possible that publishers of educational materials may literally "price themselves out of business."

One or two imaginative solutions to the problem of the high costs of textbooks (which problem may have a truly detrimental effect on education as we know it today) seem worth presenting.

One way of defraying costs would be for educators to adopt, for all grade levels, elementary and secondary as well as collegiate, the practice of abstracting works. Outlines of courses of study could be printed rather than the costly and often ponderous (and pretentious) tomes that are published today. One college professor has taken this route with considerable success. Instead of having his students purchase an expensive textbook, he himself has written condensed outlines of the courses he teaches. This practice cuts costs by over two-thirds while serving the purpose of providing clear, accurate, basic facts upon which he may elaborate as necessary in the course of his lectures. There seems to be no reason this practice could not be adopted, to both an economic and pedagogical advantage, by elementary and secondary school teachers as well.

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Another way of helping to offset the high costs of textbooks which is currently in progress—but which would no doubt benefit from support—is the restricted undertaking of international publishing. The publishing of one edition of a text in several languages at a time—the more the better—results in the distribution of the costs of printing any given volume over a much vaster population than otherwise would occur, not only making more textbooks available to more students for less, but providing, at the same time, for the printing of books which would otherwise be too expensive to print at all. English, which in terms both of prestige and the number of individuals speaking it throughout the world, would no doubt play a vital role in increasing this enterprise of international publishing.

Printing has been a great boon to education, and while the two have never been at cross-purposes to one another, it is safe to say that each is motivated by a different concern. Publishers are businessmen who aspire, primarily, to profits; educators and teachers, hopefully, aspire, above all, to teach. Due to a greatly increased population of students, heightened publishing costs, and an increased demand for longer and more specialized education, the costs of education have soared. One way to help offset these spiraling costs is the adoption of revisions and adaptations of publishing methods, both by the use of textual abstractions or condensations and by the promotion of international publishing. English, as the world's foremost language, can play a vital role in the latter process especially, thus contributing in a major way to the solution of a mounting problem in education which threatens, otherwise, to continue (and worsen) in the future — possibly to the detriment of not only English education, but to education as a whole.

EDUCATION FOR JOBS ISN'T ENOUGH FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS

In his final address as president of the National Council of Teachers of English, November 20, in Boston, Robert Squires of Oneonta High School, New York, asked NCTE members to strive to help their students become fully human despite a harsh world.

"In the cruel environment of brick and concrete streets and in an atmosphere of turmoil abroad and complex social tensions at home," he urged, "let us strive to keep alive the principle that there is more to life than 'economic survival,' more than bread, nourishing though it is."

Referring to Aldous Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD, Squires called upon his listeners to help prevent the development of a dehumanized society conditioned to "despise nature and avoid books." Squires quoted Education Secretary Terrel Bell, who earlier this year told an education writers' meeting that emphasis in American education should be on "high technology vocational education, education-industry cooperation, job-related education in the workplace, and retraining adults."

Squires said he believes that the current federal priorities for education and today's emphasis on minimum competency tests and "back to basics" seriously threaten the development of fully human individuals. He referred to an ancient Persian proverb: "If I had two loaves of bread, I would sell one and buy hyacinths, for they would feed my soul." English teachers must keep their subject from being reduced purely to grammar and expository writing, he warned; literature must continue to provide food for the soul.

SOME NEEDED CHANGES

Robert Qualls

Schools of the future will face the problems that are being faced right now. How does a teacher get a whole class interested in a class or in a book? Not all students share the same interests in reading material so it becomes hard to find something that will satisfy everybody while at the same time not be boring.

The public has come in recent years to expect more from the students and especially from the teachers. Parents' main concern is that their kids be able to read when they graduate. On the other hand, teachers would like the students to have a fine appreciation of literature, understand some of the history and methods of writing and to be able to see the inner meanings behind what they read.

As our country has progressed so have our expectations of the students' capability to learn. What high school kids read 10 years ago, junior high kids read today. In another 10 years, grade school kids may be reading this same material. That's where the fundamental problem lies. The faster the country grows, the more burdens are put on the students. They must learn an extreme amount of information if they are expected to survive in our culture. Computers are being used in the early grades in schools around the country today. A few years ago computers weren't even being taught in high schools.

If teachers are to be expected to teach students all that they will need to know to fit into the coming generations, there will have to be some changes in the school systems. I believe that a major item that will help the teacher and in turn be of major benefit to the students would be the reduction of class sizes. Of course there will have to be more teachers hired, but the benefits far outweigh the expense. With smaller classes, students receive more of the teacher's attention, and teachers can go into more detail, thus giving out more information. So far this won't meet with as much resistance as my next suggestion. School should be extended to 6 days a week, or vacations should be shortened. Personally, I think the second alternative would meet with more approval. Most foreign countries have more school days than American schools. Also foreign countries are more strict in requiring students to take certain mandatory classes, an example being a foreign language. **American schools are too easy in that there are less required courses that students must take.**

These may seem like extreme measures, but other countries have been doing it for years with great success. America must start now or we will fall even further behind the world in the years to come. Finally and most importantly, the parents must take more interest in the kids' school work. If none of these items comes to pass but one, it should be this, that the parents start helping their kids to be prepared for the world. Nobody else is going to do it if they don't.

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BURNOUT: ENCOUNTER AND ESCAPE

Richard Larsen

"Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we die!"
—Moby Dick

The increasingly familiar buzzword in my title injects no small amount of fear into the hearts of those who have been close to the experience of burning out—or have already endured it and either survived or dropped away. Throughout the academic world, the woes and maladies suggested by the word are being reported in epidemic proportions. To get at what burnout means for English instructors, and the ways of avoiding it, I begin with a brief exemplum about the new archetype, Good Teacher Burned Out.

When I first met Alan in the early seventies he was one of the holdout hippies, despite his nearly forty years. Since Beatnik days he had worn long hair and a full beard, of course, and has smoked pot irregularly; no flower freak, however, he was convincingly outspoken on all the consuming issues back then: naked apes, Nixon, individual responsibility and corporate guilt, the unending zoo parade of politics in Georgia and Washington, D.D. By profession he was a teacher—an Instructor of English, to be exact—in a fifteen-person community college department not too far from Atlanta. Everyone acquainted with him knew he was one hell of a fine teacher—diligent, conscientious, commanding. A mind as lucid as his connected to a tongue so fluid could hardly be less, anyway.

We were members of the same department, three offices apart. A brandnew Ph.D., I held the rank of advanced but somewhat underpaid assistant professor; with an M.A. and no intention of going beyond, Alan was just beginning to suspect that he would remain a very underpaid instructor for a very long time. The fact of life of poor pay bothered the married me more than it did the twice-divorced and unmarried Alan. With a battered but reliable VW van (what else?) and a cheap duiplex, he had ample money to maintain his simple, "organic" lifestyle. In fact, he loved to claim that he needed only a book and someone to argue over it to have the best of life; one did not converse with Alan, one contended. Still, cantankerous and rankled by the world as he was, he was self-contained, in harmony with most things, one might even say happy. One sure fact: on campus and off, the kids loved him for his open mind and his fundamentally supportive manner.

But every Eden has its apple and every apple has its worm. For Alan the worm was not the underpay, nay, nor the overwork, which at his place and station was considerable (thirteen quarter-hours, some 90+ papers to grade each week). No, this "worm" had a name and a rank: Professor T., department chair. Basically fairminded, T. nevertheless made steelclad, inviolable rules for his troops. Was it Eric Hoffer who wandered late into an address by a professor to find him haranguing as incorrigibly

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dogmatic not the human race (as Hoffer first believed) but that portion of it known as the Stanford math department? And who was it that suggested **the reason academic disputes are so bitter is the paucity of the stake?** These are exaggerations, of course, but anyone who has been in on campus politics for more than a day or so knows that they have their considerable grains of truth.

To keep the story short, where the lousy pay gets some and the overload gets others, politics in the worst sense got Alan, got him all the way out of teaching, in fact. After ten years, forty full-and part-time quarters, of teaching (in the best sense), Alan faded out in 1976, the Bicentennial year, a victim of behind-the-scenes moves to nail him for everything from his stand against the war in Souteast Asia (this was a small town), to his advocacy of marijuana legalization, to, among issues big and small, his rufusal to teach by a departmental syllabus. Although this latter instrument was riduculously constricting (calling primarily for the teaching of a formula essay so that our students could pass—or show well statistically—in a statewide test), I chose to abide by it rather than rist not being able to put food on my family's table. Alan did not, and thus Alan lasted for one more academic year after "the law" (as it came to be known) went into effect.

Lest it be assumed that I myself am hostile toward authority, I must assert that in the recent past I held a supervisory position before giving it up voluntarily to change schools. The administrative personnel with whom I worked then and for whom I now work are of uniformly high personal and professional quality. In citing the case of Alan I intend only to highlight the lesser-known third cause of disaffection with academia that causes people to burn out and drop away: inability to dope with arbitrary decisions on the part of apparently inept or powerdrunk administrators. The other two causes, underpay and overwork, have already been mentioned and are widely known both in and out of academia. (A fourth cause is primarily the bane of instructors below the college level: classroom discipline problems.)

At any rate, Alan, who touched so many young minds in such enlightened ways, is now hors de combat. He had been bitten by a kind of paper tiger and was simply unwilling to go through the motions of formal protest and negotiation, which might not have gotten him very far, anyway; he was, to use the precise word, terminated, although burned has richer connotations. Through the grapevine his students found out about it and gave him a farewell party that lasted one long afternoon at a local bear & pizza joint. A few of them cried. Alan himself seemed at the party, in all those final weeks in fact, to be taking it in stride, arguing his side, talking of future prospects out Weat somewhere, occasionally laughing with that hearty bellow that echoed down the corridor into all the offices, including the chairman's. Yet his eyes were curiously shadowed—not hurt, exactly, not even more typically defiant, just sort of lackluster. They resembled nothing so much as—and reality does not strain the metaphor—the ashes of a fire which has run its course, which has burned out.

The last I heard of Alan he was in Colorado Springs, meanaging a profitable Shell station. Often I have wanted to pack my family into the car and head west along some Interstate, ostensibly to take a vacation in that lovely, burgeoning city in the shadow of the Rampart Range, but in reality to find and talk again with one of the best friends I have ever had. But in truth I am afraid—afraid of the state those eyes might be in now, afraid, too, of catching in them a reflection of something I do not wish to become. For if I ever do perceive it in my own gaze—the blankness, the uncaring—I will know that part of my life is at an end. It will be all motion and sound then, all empty rhetoric and chalkdust.

II

Wandering the streets of 19th century New Bedford at the outset of his story, Ishmael speaks of "a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation. . .whenever it is a damp, dirzzly November in my soul." His way of coping is simpler than the ways many of us have in the modern workaday world: he runs off to sea, of course. How perfectly natural—the clean air, the open spaces, the total disconnectedness. And how perfectly adolescent. For us, his method is akin to hungering for a warm and fleshly tri-dimensional love while thumbing through the thin, flat pages of Playboy and Playgirl.

A late 20th century professor has it closer to the truth:

> My institution is in the throes of a new wave of long range planning using management by objectives. What is the objective of someone who has been on the job twenty years?. Chances are, he's already been killed off or is bored stiff. Trout season is more appealing than a file-and-forget planning document.
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> Maybe this wouldn't happen if we didn't plan to stay in one career for our entire working lives. Twenty years of the ntroductory courses are enough for anybody. Freshmaen are more than satisfied with one term. A potted plant that grows must be repotted. It outgrows its confines. Faculty outgrow the potentials of their jobs, too. Instead of being rootbound, academicians—faculty and administrators—should plan to leave. A person should stay in a career only as long as it remains challenging and stimulating. That's where the rewards are and the self-satisfaction. Without personal growth any job becomes lever pulling.(1)

No doubt Harley Sachs is right in the majority of cases, for teachers as well as engineers, insurance slaespersons, leverpullers, whatever. But he too fails to see the reality of being inescapably locked into a career track, of spending years developing a limited number of skills which are virtually useless outside the confines of that track. The truth must be faced that the primary skill of someone who has taught basic composition for a dozen years is grading freshman essays. Where else can such a trade be marketed than in some other hall of academe? Certainly not in book editorial offices, the most seemingly likely place, for they have their own sets of skills (buldt into strict job descriptions, no doubt) and are nearly as crowded with job seekers as our halls are. No, jumping track is the answer for souls as volatile as Ishmael and Alan, not for Professor Smith and Cohen on our right and left.

So where does that conclusion leave us? Burn out, naturally—but not necessarily. I am not toying with paradox but dealing in fact when I claim that burnout is nearly always inevitable but at the same time readily avoidable. There are those who will work through it as tey worked or are working through their other mid-life crises, and more power to them. They may in fact be the large majority, those with one eye on the clock and the other eye onr etirement and the third eye (the one that counts) on home and family and car and dog. It is neither facetious nor facile to say that they will make it, most of them, not by the skin but by the edges of their teeth. For often it is just a nerve-wracking grind, the process of hanging in there year after year, semester after semester, essay after essay; more power to them, indeed, to us, for we will need it. We will need and use that steady humming inner strength that takes a woman or man out of bed before seven each day and in front of a class at eight or nine. They will need it and use it for all those increasingly poor papers waiting on

their desks at work and at home. They, we, will need it, God knows, for the committee work too.

In her acclaimed Errors and Expectations, Mina Shaughnessy presents a wonderful image of colleges "opening their doors with one hand and then leading students into an endless corridor of remedial anterooms with the other" (p. 293). Twisted just slightly, that phrase could as well be applied to those who teach as to those who learn. Professors, instructors, adjuncts, and lecturers queue up surely in the gray halls of purgatory if nowhere else, knowing they have not seriously offended God and man in their line of work—no scrabbling in filth, no selling useless items to the gullible, no doubledealing with customers and partners. The "wrong" that they have done, paradoxically, is to have chosen this profession that does not allow them to provide for themselves and their families in the manner of the saleswoman next door or even the foreman next block over. Unwilling or unable to unionize, they point a limp, accusing finger at some legislature or endowment fund a thousand metaphorical miles away and then go back to work, burned over if not burned out.

The truly worthy among us fight to a man, to a woman, to maintain old standards in the context of new groundrules and new students, to awakenminds wishing only to slumber, to teach subjects and strategies that often seem at best tangential to the real world and at worst totally unconnected to it. To scale valid generalization down to individual example, I think momentarily of a woman at a North Carolina School. In her late forties, having taught for longer than her twenty-year allotment, she hangs in there very tough as head of her university's remedial program. She refuses to compromise her high standards in communication skills, but rather than resort to browbeating or tedious drills, she has with extremely hard work adapted the skills portion of the program to a variety of methods and aides, including magazine study programs, visiting speakers from all walks of life, fun-and-games learning strategies, and, above all, leaning over the shoulders of each and every student in her classes until the word is found, the sentence constructed, the idea made intelligible. Remarkable but not unique, she represents the best of her profession—adaptable (as Alan was not), gregarious (as Ishmael was not), extraordinarily energetic (as some of us are not), and in touch with her charges and their needs.

She is the type for whom burnout seems unlikely if not impossible. Would that it were so for the entirety of our profession; but familiar statistics(2) and personal contact tell us that it is not, tell us, rather, that to be in teaching for long is to be ever-more-readily inflammable. Pace Alan, I must return to my point that, in other ways too, one is able not only to endure but to prevail. If the avenues through burnout are too rough, ways around it exist; if one cannot penetrate a formidable line, the game shows us, one can often score by running end or passing.

III

I wish to extend the football metaphor, if I may, for I see two major ways to avoid burnout in mid-career or sooner, and neither one takes the patience of a Job or the will of an ahab. They are somewhat similar to an end run and a pass play. They both take effort, but certainly no more than sometimes required to get it up once more for the comma splice or outlining, and perhaps a bit less than it takes to approach for the umpteenth time the multi-week research paper assignment. And they do pay off in scores, in results, the primary of which has ben for me and for those who chose or choose similar paths a better and brighter downhil side (that's side, not slide). The last ten yards to paydirt, to continue the metaphor, should be at least as exciting as the first seventy. Ask Christian Darling. (In fact, read his whole instructive story: Irwin Shaw's "The Eight-Yard Run.")

The first and perhaps more fruitful suggestion for avoiding burnout is to open up up new areas for exploratin within the parameters of one's own discipline. Contrary to what most students and many administrators believe, English is not a static and unchanging field. It is not just one essential thing—the freshman comp-sophomore lit sequence—with a few gradually disappearing frills (the advanced and graduate courses) for gradually dying senior professors. I am living proof of that fact, and without too much further comment I will describe parts of my career since 1976, letting the post-Alan events speak for themselves.

Almost as my friend was at that time, I voluntarily went into developmental composition, where almost overnight I found myself involved with new colleagues, a different type of student, an expanding pedagogical field, and complex but exciting daily classroom challenges. I taught, did some spadework, headed up a skills center, and managed to publish a few pieces before this area began to wear a little thn for me (after several years). Then I discovered technical communication, a natural outgrowth of my abiding interest in the sciences. Before I could get in on the bottom floor here, without losing rank or salary, I had to change jobs, going to a slightly more technically oriented institution, and avail myself of one of the many 3-5 day ($300-$800) summer workshops in teaching technical communication. In this field I am now thoroughly and happily immersed, but if and when it loses its luster I can choose one of the several other options opening up for me, including but not limited to (a) returning with a fresh perspective to sophmore world and American literature (I have rarely left composition completely) or (b) entering piecemeal into the administrative side of academia. Neither one of these is exactly equivalent to managing a Shell station in Colorado Springs or selling widgets in San Diego, but, in a pinch, they will do. And in English, the pinch is definitely on—should be for some time, too.

That's my pass play. Now the end run, for those without the means or the support to explore new areas. I have not tried running end to any great lenght but the tactic has brought solid results tomany, including that fine lady in the Carolinas mentioned above. It concerns methodology. Again, for those in the profession not totally aware of what is taking place beyond the borders of their campuses, there is a mild revloution underway. It has been going on, in fact, for several years now, at least since the transformational grammarians tried and partially succeeded in changing the way we see and teach composition. The important thing was not their success or lack of it but their efforts—they gave us and our students a different view of how language does or should hang together. And in doing so they injected fresh blood into the veins of a flagging profession, keeping it alive with new textbooks, studies, classroom activities, etc. One of the finest fruits of their labor was sentence-combining, now a well-proven method of improving writing skills from the junior high to the college level. **New bottles for old wine abound.**

Likewise, the back-to-basics movement in English—equivalent, in a way, to the national conservative backlash that brought the G.O.P. to its feet in the form of a septuagenarian President—has renovated some of the older methodologies and demonstrated that they can indeed still work. A typical case in point is diagramming, currently riding a minor crest of renewed interest, a classroom technique that enables many technologically oriented young minds to grasp (by structurally <u>seeing</u>, so to speak) the way English sentences work. Moreover, publishers and media specialists spend millions each year to facilitate the day-to-day classroom employment of both old and new techniques; it is the impoverished teacher indeed who cannot find the time or make the effort to orient himself or herself to a few of these guiding stars in the changing composition skies. Short of actually grading papers, they can show the way to renewed energy and joy in the classroom and bring one to better results with the

course as whole: students who, one way or another, have been taught to write effectively.

Through the line, around end, or over the top, it is one invariable goal that counts: more literate students, young men and women who by passing through our hands, by sitting in our classrooms, can better communicate with other human beings. Looked at from the most enlightened perspective, that is not so terribly much to ask from them—or from ourselves. We have nothing to lose for the effort but our profession, however long or short the individual odds of this happening. We have nothing to gain, paradoxically, but the very same thing.

IV

This brief closure I address to Alan (and by indirection to all potential Alans), should he ever chance to read these words after pumping gas and totaling receipts in the elongating gloom of Pike's Peak. Old friend, I am truly sorry that you dropped away when you did. It was, as always, coldest and bleakest before the dawn, but now that the sun has shown us all a sign that it can rise again, I wish you could be here to enjoy its promised warmth. And hey, look, those few polluting clouds around, the ones still needing removal, only help to keep our souls from getting burned.

[1]Harley L. Sachs, "Mid-Career Management," Focus, 5:3 (Spring 1979), 54.

[2]Popularized recently in Time (16 June 1980) and Newsweek (27 April 1981) but commonly cited over the past few years in educational journals.

"LET THE BEST OF THE PAST INFORM THE FUTURE," SAYS NCTE PRESIDENT STEWIG

On taking office as president of the National Council of Teachers of English last November 22 in Boston, John Warren Stewig of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee called on teachers to develop the habit of seeing today's tasks in a larger perspective.

"Too few teachers," he said, "have a sense of where we have been and where we are going." Nevertheless, the new NCTE president sees teachers at all levels as concerned about questions larger than grading the next set of student papers. Stewig said that in interviews with teachers, kindergarten through college, conducted for a recent research project, he "was struck by the willingness of teachers to step apart from pressing decisions about what to do the next hour . . . and talk at length about broader aspects of their jobs, apparently finding this a challenge."

"The past gives teachers help with today's concerns," said Stewig. "The past helps us restructure . . . . There is no need to reinvent the wheel, if we know the kinds of wheels our professional predecessors rode on . . . ."

TEACHERS AND LEARNING

Sandy Monhollen

Are you providing the right kind of food for your students? Is it the "junk food" type: meaningless mumblty-jumblties that are way over a student's head and soon forgotten after the test? Or is it nutritious, made with much thought, cultured with easy-to-understand words? So many of our teachers today pass out junk food and start the decaying process. What damage is done then is far more than any mouth could ever hold.

Why are classes considered "a waste" by the majority of kids? It's relatively simple: any dull, unenlightening class will be classified as a "dud" and mean absolutely nothing to a student, no matter what the gradebook says. Subjects are presented in such a way that most students would rather sleep or write notes instead of pay attention. You must think that you are working with young, undeveloped minds and are responsible for what goes into these minds; **therefore your job is just slightly less important than that of a mother.**

It's possible to get kids to learn; you just have to approach them in the right manner and style. You are constantly being observed by someone; that's why the manner in which you approach the class is important. Are you like Hitler, who set up an antidisestablishmentarianismic rule, felt he was the supreme being, and scoffed at the "ignorance" of those below his standards? In this dictatorship atmosphere, school seems more like an Army boot camp than a place of education. Or are you an approachable Will Rogers, who never met anyone he didn't like, was easily related to, and was on everybody's level? This is a tremendously large factor in itself, for no one cares to hear anything a "Hitler" would have to say, but everyone can warm up to a "Will Rogers."

I had a teacher in seventh grade that I still consider a real gem. He was very congenial and patient, but he let you know who was boss. He taught types of sentences declaratively, verbals, backtracking after and diagramming

His "compound outhouses" made us roll with laughter as did "the nouns that dribble". While learning something new, there was never a dull moment, but I can't think of one former student of his who now makes less than a "B" in English. I also can't think of anyone who I'd rather have than this teacher for a good, close friend.

Learning should be fun yet binding, confusing but not impossible, an experience to remember that's not a nightmare; and it's up to you, our teachers, to show us the difference and patiently tell us what it's all about.

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WHY IS IT THAT WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME WHAT I DO FOR A LIVING I TELL THEM THAT I WORK FOR THE PHONE COMPANY?

Elayne P. Feldstein

Do you find anything vaguely familiar about the not-so-instant replay of a recurring scenario from my life and times as an English teacher?

FADE IN on an informal social gathering at a well-meaning friend's house.

Friend (bringing an unsuspecting, good-looking, confident, single-man within my grasp): I'd like to introduce J. James Roberts.

I (trembling at the presence of both a first initial and an interchangeable first and last name—Edwin Newman, eat your heart out): Hi! (not too literate, but sincere)

J.J. R.: Hello there, pretty maiden. I'm in oil, futures, soy beans, light bulbs, and business. What about you?

I (uncontrollably compelled to honesty if this is to be a truly meaningful relationship): I? I teach English. . .

J.J.R. (coolly choking on his drink): Oops—well, I'd better watch how I talk.*

I: But. . .

J.J.R.: Excuse me, I think I hear my stocks calling me.

FADE OUT to dismal.

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* Other typical reactions to my revealing my profession may be substituted for this line:

(1) "Funny, you don't look like one," also known as, "Gee, I wish my English teacher looked like you; maybe I should be going to school."
(2) "Read any good books lately?" (Ha Ha)
(3) "Now I'll have to mind my P's and Q's, whatever that means."
(4) "I remember my English teacher. I hated him/her."
(5) "I had the worst handwriting in my class."
(6) "I hated Shakespeare."
(7) "Maybe you'll tell me once and for all: is it eether' or ither?"
(8) "um. . .hmm. . .grumble. . .'scuse me."
(9) "Why can't the kids of today read and write anymore?"

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The other common response when I reveal my profession to a newcomer is that the stranger before me suddenly lapses into a rapid-fire monotone recital of "Hamlet's Soliloquy" or the opening lines of the "Prologue" to The Canterbury Tales—in Middle English, no less! (My own mother still breaks into "Hence loathed Melancholy,/Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born" when I start to talk about school.) Originally, these productions were made possible through the efforts of some English teacher who insisted that everyone needed "to memorize and recite some English" in order to "sound cultured." These teachers never considered when it would be practical or appropriate for one of their prodigies to recite from shakespeare or Chaucer or Milton. But that mattered as little as did whether or not the play-back machines would ever understand a word of what they were spewing forth in automatic replay even years and years later.

No wonder that when I am asked at a social gathering what I "do for a living," I would feel comfortable telling people that I work for the telephone company. That creates some conversation without controversy or even condemnation for all those who came before me. It appears that after years of study and dedication I am on the defensive about my profession. Why?

The sterotyped public image of "The English Teacher" has been modeled after a generation of serious professionals that may indeed fit our own remembrances of our English teachers. I, for one, still quake at the memory of my steadily aging Freshman English teacher, wailing away in class, trudging through the fens and pages of Beowulf, obviously identifying with and lamenting for the often ignored Grendel's dam (whom I am sure til this day the teacher closely resembled in appearance and mood). Or, I conjure up memories of another professor whose tightly pulled bun was the guarantor of a sour, unpleasant expression and a most offensively glaring eye. This teacher cackled "constructive comments" at us in class from her front-seat promonotory; she had the power to melt us into our seats with a word, to disintegrate our egos with one fiery breath.

Do I exaggerate? Perhaps. But despite the many wonderful educators who have touched my life, the images of the offensive and insensitive English teachers loom larger than the others.

Our "public image" as English teachers has been hammered out of the frequent negative experiences that many people—including ourselves—have had in their school years, most especially in the English classroom. And no matter how we may try not to make the same mistakes that our forebears did (as we try to escape the mistakes that our parents made with us), as teachers (and as parents), we frequently respond to the same cues in the same way.

We are seen as arbiters of the spoken and written word, constantly and compulsively seeking to correct anyone, anywhere, in any way. This is not far from true for me. How often, when someone is pouring out a heartfelt, emotional confession to me have I had to squelch the interruption: "But it's 'you and I' dear, not 'you and me'"? Or, has any one of you had the same mad dream as I to go through the world with paint brush in hand on a virtuous quest to save the apostrophe? (Perhaps we could start in some of our schools with the Boys' Room and the Girls' Room.) Hasn't the urge hit you at least for a moment?

Yes, we are in many ways the last bastions of correctness, and we should be. Whether we are descriptive or prescriptive, hard-sell or soft-sell, we all participate in some way in helping others to learn the best way, the correct way, to use language. We all still believe in the fundamental efficacy and beauty of our language, with its basic rules, assumptions, traditions, and changeability. The problem arises from our presentation at times, not from our orientation.

The unfavorable image of the English teacher nee "elocutioner" (sounds like "executioner") both negates our colleagues in our sister discipline of Speech, and also places upon us the burden of pedantry. Our compulsive perfectionism serves to alienate us from our public, our students. First, we are expected to be whiz kids: to spell archaic trick words; to explain and justify unreasonable language quirks; to pronounce words "the correct way"—even if there is more than one acceptable pronunciation; to recite in tandem with equal fervor whatever piece of literature spills from the well-trained memory of some new challenger; and to sound like an English teacher—whatever that means. And then, we are still expected to feel comfortable with everyone else, part of the crowd, inconspicuous formal members of an informal social group.

But are we to resist a "teachable" moment in order to win friends? Are we to compromise our faith in intelligible, intelligent communication between humans? Are we to hide behind the telephone company in exchange for immediate approval? Not really.

Most of us do not perceive ourselves as martyrs to the correct word, soldiers fighting to the last man and woman and hyphen to protect the holy grail of perfection in language usage. This only impedes our interaction and reduces chances of success in encouraging and promoting Standard American English. Most of us today are a little less rigid about rules when it comes to stimulating our students to participate in class. What is so wrong about letting one participle dangle in conversation if we can still get the hang of what's being said? Is social discussion the appropriate medium for grammar lessons?

It is not always that "right time and place" theorem that can help us with our public image. For more often than not, our negative image has been created at the times and places that were "right": the classrooms. As I observe some (not all, thank goodness) of my colleagues, listen to students, and think back to other educational experiences, I am constantly astounded by the embarrassment thrust upon students. Most specifically, in the teaching of English, the onslaught of insensitivity occurs during classroom discussions, paper corrections, and oral interpretations.

Certainly, the exuberant and spontaneous discussions of literature and writing that evolve during our class sessions are part of the excitement of teaching. As we exchange ideas with our students, many of us are stimulated, challenged, and rewarded by the shared thoughts that grow from the discussions. But many of us also forget what it was like to be a student on the other side of the desk, afraid to be called on, self-conscious and shy in front of peers and an ever-correcting teacher.

Nothing can be quite as humiliating as being corrected in front of people even before an idea has escaped from our mouths. How can we expect students to feel free to question and join in if we are prepared to pounce at the very first impropriety of usage? Language is our students' primary source of communication also, and they have managed—even in their own ungrammatical styles—to make themselves understood before we stepped into their lives. Why not grant them this much success and reserve

judgment or criticism until there is an appropriate time and place—which may not always be the classroom.

I am not suggesting that we ignore the errors our students make. We can, however, create an atmosphere conducive to correction if we correct with warmth and gentleness, not ridicule and disapproval. Individual attention can be provided without calling undue attention to the individual. We can speak to students after class or during conference time, explaining slowly and carefully in private what we have noted during the classroom discussion.

Although the students' nervousness about answering in class is not reserved for just the English classroom, the tension heightens in our field where we encourage classroom participation. And in the English class, not only the content but the form is open to scrutiny because of our training. We do our students a disservice if we do not correct them: "the real world," as my students refer to the business world, will not overlook errors. Time and time again, our students will be judged on their oral speech patterns. Standard American English is the language of the working world, and our students must master this language if they want to be successful in their careers. There are few exceptions to this "fact of life." The English teacher should take the opportunity to prepare students for the "real world"; however, this preparation can be conducted with tact and awareness of the other person.

Another trademark of the English teacher is the carefully graded student paper. How can any outsider know the hours that it takes for us to provide conscientious and responsible evaluations of written work? On the other hand, consider the horrifying memories that we have when we think of times when we received papers that resembled war-wounded refugees from The Red Badge of Courage, blood-stained and coffee-splattered. How can anyone appreciate our efforts when obviously, at immediate glance, we have so disapproved of his? Have you ever noticed how students shrink in their seats as papers are returned? Have you ever heard a student ask in a moment of false bravado: "Didn't you leave any of my writing there? You wrote more than I did!"

We all know that the written corrections on a paper offer an opportunity for intimacy, individualization, and constructive suggestions for improvement. We have yet to invent the "short-answer-machine-marked" composition. We can take advantage of our grading procedures to help build student strengths, not to build their resistance. For instance, instead of using a red pen—the traditional color for disaster--I use any other colors that I can buy. This diminishes the "red plague" effect. Also, I collect some comments so that I also write a short, personal yet professional note to the student at the end of the paper, presenting an over-all reaction to the paper and a summary of weaknesses and strengths. By saving some comments for the end, I avoid the interlinear notations that are often difficult to squeeze in and more difficult to interpret the next day.

Still another way to mitigate the image of "The Red Sea" or "the multitudinous seas incarnadine" on a paper is to stimulate a student to think about what he has written or what has been said. I show him that I considered what he wrote; now he is responsible for considering what I have written. I ask him to respond to my questions in writing. Thus, I am initiating a two-way correspondence, creating another practical writing assignment, and encouraging the art of letter-writing. Quite often when I try

this exercise with my students, I find that they support their positions extremely well in a discussion aimed at my criticism. The support points from the letter find easy transition into support within the essays that have been written.

Another area of our professional lives that engenders a poor public impression emanates from the many long moments when we decide to read and read and read to our classes. These lessons might be rationalized by us as "oral interpretation," but they are more frequently known to our students as "oral devastation." Unless we take the time to prepare our presentations—whether they be excerpted passages or prepared lecture notes—we cannot hope to keep our captive audiences awake, much more, interested.

All of us have been subjected to the agony of sitting and listening to a colorless and monotonous reading. How can we ask our students to endure an unexciting, inexpressive reading by us—just because we're there? Nothing can assassinate the sonorous sensuality of a poem more efficiently than a bad reading. Enthusiasm does not necessarily translate into our vocal presentation. The least we can do is practice—like any trained professional—so that we can reach our audience, which does not have the right to leave, the opportunity to switch channels, or the grace to fall asleep quietly.

Reading for a class cannot be a substitute for teaching a class or doing one's homework. I have often heard students mumble, "Why should I waste my time reading at home when I know we're going to read every boring word again in class?" We all understand, in theory, that classroom readings can be an enrichment, that is, highlight certain points in the text, challenge interpretations, emphasize the beauty of particular passages. By encouraging students to participate in these readings we can broaden the involvement and the interest, while at the same time, we can share the burden of preparation with others. All of us have enjoyed, at one time or another, the active contributions of other class members when examining a scene from a play. How much more alive the whole text becomes when we hear the voices of the characters and when we see the action. The material becomes more accessible and more vital to all of us if we share the oral presentation with willing students and if we share a well-prepared presentation.

I am not suggesting anything revolutionary or innovative. Nor am I mentioning anything different from what many of us do, from time to time, in our classes. I am just reviewing and reminding those of us who forget. For by falling into comfortable patterns that disregard or overlook the negative stereotype that we have begun to dissolve, we are doing ourselves a severe injustice. The approaches that I suggest might soften the severe outline of the inapproachable English teacher, the perfectionist pedant, while at the same time, they may offer a less threatening avenue for students to follow and to enjoy. The teacher will not have sacrificed any personal dignity, but instead might have transcended a life-long barrier that often separates him from those he wishes to help. And it will be fine to have those students "on our side." Perhaps then a positive image of the English teacher will remain in the memory of the adult who sits on the school board, deliberating about additional funds for his school's new Creative Writing Program, or who sits down with his child when he needs help in English and can help him.

Daily, as each of us faces our classes, future generations of cocktail party goers, local board members, business leaders, and political activists sit before us. We present an image to these young people that will remain with them throughout their lives. If

we maintain an aloof posture, as medieval monsters with red ink dripping from our fangs; as eccentric and archaic pedants obsessed with how one says something rather than what one says; as linguistic circuit judges, holding court wherever we can preside; as impervious presenters of scholarly gobbledegook, then we have not only perpetuated the image that we conveniently blame on our professional predecessors, but we do not even present the service of the phone company—for at least they have open lines for communication.

DEVELOPING PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Produced for the Office of Gifted and Talented, U.S. Office of Education, Deaprtment of Health,Education, and Welfare,by the Council for Exceptional Children

HOW DO I BEGIN?

The first step in program development is planning, usually divided into three components:

Needs Analysis

Because every community represents a unique constellation of factors, an analysis of local needs should be conducted, considering such aspects as size of the community, availability of funds and physical facilities.

Target Group

A broadened concept of giftedness has been established by the U.S. Commissioner of Education in the 1971 Report to Congress. This definition cites general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability.

Identification

Multiple criteria should be used to identify students and should include both standardized and subjective assessments. For the intellectually gifted, measures on achievement and intelligence tests are appropriate, with scores falling in the upper 2 to 3 percentiles of national or local norms. High creative producers can be identified through the use of tests of creativity and creativity checklists. Judgments by professional personnel using more subjective instruments may be used, and parents or other adults knowledgeable about a child's performance outside school should be consulted.

HOW IS CURRICULUM FOR THE PROGRAM DETERMINED?

The curriculum for a gifted and talented program is not a road map for the teacher to follow without making any detours. It is unique in every community and with every target population. However, there are some common elements upon which the curriculum should be based. It should focus on the development of skills which are beyond the scope of the regular classroom, and content should be in a student's areas of interest. Subject matter should be studied in its appropriate context, using the techniques of the field rather than engaging in abstract exercise. It should also focus on the conceptual themes of important ideas rather than on the mere collection of new facts. Finally, the curriculum should include options which offer the student the freedom to explore.

WHAT RESOURCES EXIST FOR PROGRAM PLANNING ?

All areas are rich in resources. Each district should investigate those resources available for use within its program. Community resources within an area may encompass all of the natural environment and urban centers. Specialists in a number of occupations may reside in your community. Members of the local school staff may also constitute valuable human resources.

For more information contact the state consultant for the gifted and talented in your state department of education, or write:

The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

LET'S HELP JOHNNY

Maria Valverde

Let's assume that Johnny can read. Our major concern, then, is not that Johnny can't read. So, as English educators, we're practically "home free," right? Not exactly. Johnny reads but he reads on a different level than Jenni, who reads on a different level than Alex, who reads on a different level than Alice, etc. In fact, in a course (any course) of sophomore or junior level, it is reasonable to expect a reading range of a minimum of ten levels! Consequently, it is our broad shouldered responsibility to present a program of individualized instruction.

Some schools attempt to solve the problem (of virtually impossible/impractical diversification) with specialized remedial reading programs. Competency exams and/or teachers' evaluations generally indicate the courses. Often, the students are bombarded with a variety of standardized soft- and hardware. Too often, the students themselves remain unconvinced of the necessity of the skills struggle. Moreover, a "remedial" program may inherently convey a self-defeating stigma. The students involved are labelled "inferior". Younger students would then reject the program, and their (lack of) progress would reflect this. Older students, however, would rebel, and might simply refuse to work or even attend class. Surely some remedial programs enjoy substantial successes, but it might make more sense to require all secondary students to receive reading instruction.

Many educators won't be able to rely on an external program, and the competent teacher won't want to (totally). If the instructor is expected to use predetermined texts, his first chore will be to determine how well his students will be able to work with those texts. He might choose to administer any of a variety of diagnostic tests. He could, for example, present a "cloze" readability procedure to his students. Or, the instructor might try open and/or closed-text content area inventories. In any case, the instructor should at all times strive to maintain a non-threatening atmosphere. The observations/evaluations made should not be included in the student's final grade, and the student has a right to understand the objectives behind these initial "performance tests."

Once the instructor determines student "readability" of the text, he can begin to "level the levels." More than ever, carefully planned instruction will be invaluable. If the instructor has plotted specific objectives, he can more clearly relay the principles to be covered. Students can be provided with advance organizers such as chapter outlines or "key points." Handouts of important questions and ideas in the form of study guides and/or review sheets might be offered. Additionally, class sessions on basic study skills could supplement these guides. It could also be well worth the time and energy to construct more readable, revised summaries of text content. **Finally, it would not be wise to ignore one of the classroom's most vital resources-the student!** Perhaps a few students will be at least sufficiently adequate, if not exceptionally competent. Often, student-to-student tutorial sessions can help fill a frustrating text-to-student or even instructor-to-student impasse.

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After the waters have all been tested, it might be wise to conduct periodic progress checks. Again, exercises not to be considered at report time can help indicate student successes. It is important to always emphasize success, but it is also unrealistic to expect no problems. The best we can do is remain patient and determined. As professional educators, we have the obligation to make the extra effort—to reach out to the individual. Let's help Johnny—on Johnny's level.

New Consensus on High School Curriculum Is Emerging

A major shift in the education community's philosophy about the nature of high school education has emerged over the past year. Recent statements and initiatives by influential groups of educators, leading individual scholars and critics of education, and research foundations reveal a consensus favoring return to greater academic rigor for all secondary school students. These new moves appear to be born out of general dissatisfaction with the dominant type of curriculum of the past generation--a miscellany of individual options, some of them intellectually undemanding.

Critics now see electives as leaving too many college-bound students underprepared for the demands of higher learning and too many of the job-oriented without transferable skills. Critics charge that the nation cannot afford to excuse a majority of its citizens from at least trying to absorb and understand the complex issues that influence their lives in an age of computers, nuclear weapons, and international confrontations. The following is a brief overview of this current thinking.

The College Board's Initiative

The extra capital letter in "Project EQuality," recently announced by the College Board, symbolizes a conviction that to succeed in college, high school students, whether they are part of the majority or minority groups, must develop their abilities to read, write, study, speak, listen, reason, and do math. Project EQuality's aim is to firm up agreement about sound college preparation in the eighties and thus encourage constructive change. Describing the project, College Board President George Hanford insisted that Project EQuality billed as a ten-year effort "is not an attempt to establish a single national curriculum." But as Lawrence Biemiller reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* September 30, "The program's goal is to develop a national standard of achievement for students who plan to attend college, as well as a national definition of 'academic competency' the ability to perform at the undergraduate level."

Through the project, the College Board will encourage colleges to state their preference for applicants who have taken a basic academic curriculum. It will urge high schools to draw on the College Board's new lists of competencies in revising their curriculum standards and offerings. Development of competencies is interdependent with a curriculum offering subject matter through which to develop them, Hanford said.

Developers of Project EQuality define reading competency as ability "to comprehend the major and minor ideas in a written work, . . . summarize those ideas in one's own words," and differentiate between fact and opinion. Writing competency, they said, means knowing how to conceive and organize ideas, use grammatically correct sentences, vary one's writing style, and produce and edit reports that call for research.

SAMMY'S DILEMMA: NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Dick G. Winchell

Sammy walked into the English class for the first day of his high school career. He had never adjusted to the sterile rooms with desks all lined up, and no windows, common in the Anglo school. Totally unlike his home and reservation community, it was something he did not like, but he had no choice except to tolerate these rooms for the coming year.

His mind wandered as the instructor welcomed them and gave the first assignment of the semester: "I'd like each of you to stand, state your name, and briefly describe what you did during your summer vacation."

"No! Oh, no!" Sammy thought. His heart beat doubled, and he could feel the blood pulsing through his face. "Not that."

All too soon it was his turn. He was the only Indian in the classroom, with no one to turn to. He could not stand—would not—since he had learned not to stand out or be apart from the group. How could he be asked to do such a thing? Oratory was a strong tradition in his community, and he was a good speaker, but only when he had something to say. Why should he put words into the air for no reason.

"You're next, Sammy. Are you going to tell us what you did this summer?"

His answer was silence. Somehow he was calm, beyond it all now.

"Please stand and tell us what you did this summer," the instructor stated loudly. "Can't you understand English?"

Sammy's silence became a terrible affront to the teacher, as she became more angry.

"You will stand and tell the class what you did this summer, or go to the principal's office until you do."

There was no thought as Sammy slowly stood up and walked from the room. No one understood his silence.

Each day for his freshman year in high school, instead of going to his English class, Sammy would report to the principal's office to read or simply watch the walls and clocks as the time passed.

Unfortunately, this is a true story, and when I met "Sammy," the only thing slowing his successful college career was poor performance in English. Perhaps the incident was only the culmination of Sammy's educational problems, but it seems representative of the problems Indian students face in the classroom. This paper is a brief attempt to shed some light upon the dilemma of Indian students in the classroom, which is perhaps more a dilemma for the concerned teacher than for the student.

Several critical problems exist in the English classroom if the experience is to be meaningful for Native American students. One is simply the classroom setting, but most important is awareness that a language is a skill which can be learned and studied

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apart from its use. Such a concept is generally lacking in Indian communities where non-English is spoken, even if the student does not understand the Indian language.

The problem lies in the failure to recognize the use of language as something common to the "everyday reality" of the community in which students interact as individuals. English, particularly in its ability to convey abstract ideas in single words and to make generalizations in simple statements (Boas, 1910,64), creates an extremely ethnocentric laboratory for language education. **Other languages, and persons learning language within non-English environments, often lack the conceptual frameworks required to understand English which are assumed by persons teaching English.**

English is more than a language in this sense. It is a cultural milieu which manipulates symbols and assumes understanding of those symbols and their manipulations by everyone in the classroom. Unfortunately, such assumptions are not always true.

ESTABLISHING A COMMON BASE

If common assumptions on the use of language cannot be assumed, particularly with non-Anglo students, a critical first step in teaching English is to develop a common understanding of the use of language, its function in society, the purpose of functional frameworks such as grammar or literature, and the relevance to the student. Exercises to develop this common understanding can be participative in nature, calling attention to differences in language systems, and involving students who have experienced different language and cultural systems.

The development of a common base of awareness for language can utilize social science research. Fishman defines the developing field of sociolinguistics, stating,

> Man is constatntly using language—spoken language, written language, printed language—and man is constantly linked to others via shared norms of behavior. The sociology of language examines the interaction between theses two aspects of human behavior: use of language and the social organization of behavior.(1972,45)

This idea of language used as linkage between people, the assumptions inherent in that process, and the dependence of meaningful communication upon cultural norms applies to the English classroom setting as well as real life, and can readily be incorporated into curriculum development.

Giglioli's Language and Social Context (1972) provides good case studies of the nature of problems in sociolinguistics, including an interesting work on silence in Apache culture by Basso (1972, 67-86). Ethnomethodologists have also examined this approach in classroom situations and real world analysis (Garfinkel, 1967). An interesting study is Spradley's You Owe Yourself a Drunk (1970), which describes in 'meaningful' terms the language of urban nomads.

My own reasearch has indicated that such simple questions as "Where do you live?" may not be understood by Indian youth. In their words, they would say, "Where are you staying?" Being asked this question, the young person responds immediately. I learned that there is great mobility for these young people, moving often to "stay"

with different relatives. I also found that traditional parents do not discipline their children. If a child has a discipline problem, they send the child to live with an uncle, who is able to discipline and exert authority over the child. Thus, a person might be living at a number of given homes or places, generally of relatives, although these may not be his "home".

These assumptions of language which affect normative behavior are extremely important in language, and provide an interesting point of departure from any of the more traditional English classroom experiences. Clarification and understanding of the use of language in different cultural settings may make a non-Anglo student more comfortable in class, as well as maximize that student's unique potential as a contributor to classroom discussions.

Such a process is suggested by Freire, to develop more humane educational institutions, when he states:

> It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their situation in the world. Educational and political action which is not critically aware of this situation runs the risk either of "banking" or of preaching in the desert. (1970, 85)

CONCLUSIONS

The dilemma of Native American students in an English classroom is in fact the dilemma of the English instructor's awareness and sensitivity to the reality and language milieu of these students. If Indian students can understand the contexts of language use (English) and also language use in their own communities and families, they will be much more able to participate in classroom activities, and in fact can provide interesting insight into language use and development.

The extent to which instructors can pursue these unique realities and identities of all students in the classroom is virtually unlimited. Encouraging students to discuss historic events or record family histories with parents or elders, having students explore their own identity through images and descriptive writing, and inviting guest speakers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds can stimulate learning. Most important, these efforts lead to a clearer understanding of the context of the English class for all students, and make students more comfortable in that setting.

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BASIC COMPETENCY SKILLS IN PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

Janice Streitmatter and Suzanne Padgett

Over the past several years, there has been a general public hue and cry over what many would consider a lack of basic competency skills on the part of not only high school graduates, but the teachers who teach them and those who are preparing to become teachers. In focusing on reading and arithmetic skills, state departments of education have developed Teacher Proficiency Exams which propose to weed out those who would be incompetent or ineffectual teachers. Similar tests to screen for writing skills are on the way.

Public concern over these matters is not unique to the 1970's and '80's. As early as the 1830's, records show that school administrators were concerned about "teachers who taught too few subjects, did not understand the nature of children, did not understand the subjects they taught, and did not possess skills in the art of teaching" (Lemlech and Marks, p. 16).

Current concern over basic competency skills has been illustrated in recent years by a number of studies. Among these is Wayne Danielson's presentation (1979) which found that

1. Students are spending less time writing in the primary and secondary schools;
2. Teachers are less skilled in writing than they used to be;
3. Society in general, and our schools in particular, are more tolerant of non-standard English and allow and sometimes encourage its use.

A recent featured article in Time (5-19-80, p. 88ff.) speaks to the current emphasis on writing skills:

> A notable step was taken in 1978 when Congress added writing to the list of topics eligible for Government grants. In the past year, requests for applications to get federal help for basic skills training soared from about 2,000 a year to 14,000. Last year, the National Endowment for the Humanities doled out $2.4 million for projects to improve writing, double the amount of the year before. In Detroit, the high school system has introduced writing proficiency tests for graduates. . . . Ohio schools are offering Young Authors programs, including publication of student writing and conferences at which they can discuss their work. More than 200,000 students from grades 1 through 12 in 35 states are engaged in the Individualized Language Arts program, funded by the Government. . . . The Bay Area Writing Project has spread from Berkeley, California, to 74 communities around the country. Its aim is to teach writing teachers how to teach writing.

The need for such attention to writing has arisen in many classes outside English departments, as was discovered in a recent undergraduate education course. In the

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Fall semester of 1981, the writers (an assistant professor and graduate associate) were involved in two sections of a secondary education course at the University of Arizona, "Professional Development of the Prospective Teacher." Students take this course at the beginning of their teacher education and are sophomores or above. The primary task of the course is professional development.

Although it is widely believed that students working at the college level should have a firm grasp of literacy skills, the authors found in actuality that these students were not able to express themselves in writing when given a variety of tasks, such as reviews of journal articles, observation reports, and essay examinations. The writers were struck by the wide variety and large number of writing problems and found it nearly impossible to evaluate content when the presentation was so intrusive. These examples from student writing demonstrate the inability of the students to communicate:

1. "Both parts of this is what I considered education."

2. "Then the schools get all the blame for a kid who doesn't know how to read but the kid never went to class or ever tried to learn but that doesn't matter it still is the schools fault no matter what."

3. "Max Rafferty - Is a classicist believe, that the teacher should have full control of class.

4. "That the school system as we have known does not produes kids who can think."

5. "Rafferty's philosophies was a regameated type he think that the student should be a number."

In assessing the situation, the instructors realized that a number of questions needed examination:

1. Were these students totally inexperienced in writing, or were they neglecting to use certain skills because this was not an English class?

2. Were weaknesses more often in mechanical areas such as spelling and punctuation, or were they more in structural areas such as organization and development?

3. Could any effort on the part of the instructors, given the confines of time limitation and the need to deal with specific subject matter, have any visible effect in one semester?

Presented with these questions, the instructors began to investigate ways to deal with the problem and to find answers.

Approximately 75 students in the two sections completed the first assignment, a two page journal critique. The instructor and teaching assistant determined a two-fold concern: aiding the students in better written performance on the class assignments, and reinforcing the concept that as teachers these students must present positive models to their classes by communicating in a competent manner through writing as well as speech.

The first essay exam, which was administered in early October, was used as a non-statistical, pre-test tool. Both sections of the class, 35 and 41 students, took the same exam. The exams were assessed for content information and writing skill. The tests of those students who received a score of 75% or lower were tagged as those to be monitored following each exam during the remainder of the semester. Twenty-nine percent of Section I and thirty-four percent of Section II were monitored.

A simple error count was done for each of the above exams. Mechanical errors such as spelling, punctuation, and run-on sentences were noted, as were structural problems.

In reviewing the error counts, it was clear that the Section I students made the majority of organizational errors, while the Section II students made more mechanical errors than organizational. Two enrichment treatments were developed, to meet these problems and to see if there were more value in one treatment than the other.

Prior to the administration of the second essay exam, the organizational and mechanical treatments were presented to Sections I and II respectively. The first treatment of Section I consisted of three parts. A discussion was held with the class regarding important logistical steps for taking essay exams. Examples of the points discussed were: read the entire exam; bring the appropriate tools; and answer the entire question. The second step consisted of presenting an overhead transparency with organizational errors which the students were asked to correct. The final step was a handout which had additional organizational errors. The students were asked to make the corrections individually.

Section II was given a three step treatment also. The first step of the treatment for Section I was repeated. Following this, an overhead transparency which showed mechanical errors was presented. The students were asked to make corrections as a group. This was followed with a handout which showed additional mechanical errors. The errors were corrected by the students individually.

A second treatment was administered to Sections I and II prior to the third and final essay exam. In an attempt to reinforce the organizational and mechanical information presented in the first remedial session, actual (anonymous) exam responses were shown to the group. The exams were those of two students no longer enrolled in the class. The example of gross organizational errors was shown to Section I. The class was asked to identify the errors. Similarly, an example of an essay response with many mechanical errors was shown to Section II. As a group, the class identified the errors.

The remedial treatment may not be solely responsible for the increase in the exam scores of those originally isolated as in need of writing skills remediation. However, one of the original goals of the treatment, that of improving performance on written class assignment was met for the most part. Of the students in Section I, 100% improved their exam scores. The most dramatic improvement was a case where the first exam score was 62%, the second 86% and the third 95%.

The students in Section II showed improvement as well. All students, with one exception, increased their test scores. Each of these scores was increased by at least one letter grade. In one case, an increase of three letter grades was recorded.

The study was designed to be a descriptive report of change in proficiency after treatment and is not a statistical research model. Improvement of skills was the

immediate concern. In reviewing the problems as assessed at the start of the semester, the authors reached these conclusions:

1. These students did not seem totally inexperienced in writing but appeared to be neglecting to use certain skills, possibly because they considered these skills necessary only in an English class. Many teachers outside English or writing courses do not want to spend time marking for language skills; consequently, students do not always bother to present their best skills. In this course, some students even seemed surprised that the instructors considered this proficiency important.

2. Weaknesses occurred more often in mechanical areas such as spelling and punctuation than in structural areas such as organization and development, but these areas were more quickly improved when the instructors stressed the need for proofreading and polishing the final copy. The mechanical problems seemed to be of two kinds: those that were made in haste or thoughtlessness and were soon corrected; and those that were chronic and ingrained, such "dose," "it's," "alot," and apostrophe problems. These chronic problems continued but were a smaller part of the mechanical problem. The structural problems improved rapidly after treatment, suggesting again that students had the skills but were not using them.

3. The authors were pleased to find that even a small bit of attention to writing proficiency, included in the subject matter of the course, resulted in greatly improved proficiency and performance. Further, they felt it was important for the students to see writing skills given a valid place in a non-English classroom.

This entire process of writing enrichment was not a component of the original course syllabus, but the authors felt that the situation called for attention. If one accepts that writing skills should be reinforced in a teacher preparation course, then areas of deficiency should be identified and remediation or treatment applied. It would be difficult to determine whether the students left the course believing that effective communication is important for a teacher in all areas, but the authors feel that the foundation for such a belief was firmly established.

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REMOVING THE BORE BARRIER

Doug Reed

Teaching an English class may be one of the most frustrating undertakings known. Most students feel that English is a horribly boring terror of a class. The information that is learned is hardly ever retained, and for the most part no one cares. The majority of students take English because it is a required course. This poses a problem for that beloved half-crazed individual, the English teacher. The teacher's challenge is: how do you make a student learn a subject if he's not interested in it?

English teachers who really wish to succeed as teachers must devise a method for getting the student interested in the subject. Once that is accomplished, the student will probably want to learn about English and learn to apply it. Face it, sentence diagramming and prepositional phrases are a bore. Grammar, spelling, and writing must be tackled in a new, refreshing manner to get students interested.

As a student, I always liked creative writing, but most of my teachers gave me few opportunities to do this. They just kept on pounding out rules and more rules like some hostile cannibal with a Ph.D. I often got bored and restless and found myself daydreaming. I really wish I'd been allowed to write more in class.

Writing is the most important part of English. Why not stress it more, instead of grammar and spelling? A teacher could still teach these, and incorporate these ideas into a student's work. For example, in a common school week the teacher could spend two days on a few grammar lessons and the next day or two on spelling. At the end of the week, the teacher could have the students write something on a subject they like, such as a hero and utilize the grammar and spelling they've learned in their papers. Students could then be graded on practical applications of grammar, spelling, and writing. I think if teachers added a personal touch to make it seem like they were more enthusiastic about teaching their subject, this system could work better than the one they're using now.

An important aspect of teaching is the teacher's attitude. **I sincerely believe most English teachers are not enjoying what they're doing.** In turn, they say the students aren't cooperating or that they don't want to learn. I always liked the teachers who taught with enthusiasm instead of taking a grumpy, cynical look at their jobs. I can honestly say I've only had one English teacher who appeared to be enjoying what she was doing; consequently I've learned much more from her than any of my other English teachers. Her name is Cheryl Lockhart, and I've had Freshman English and World Literature with her during high school.

Education is a two way street, however. If a student refuses to learn, there is nothing a teacher can do but try. When kids are young, their teachers must try and instill in them a true desire to learn.

These are just random thoughts I formulated as I thought about my present and former English classes. Their significance I know not, but I hope that maybe a teacher or two will someday read this and maybe use this concept as a possible teaching aid.

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM TEACHERS

Kelly Duggan

As a student progresses through his educational career, each year he is faced with a wide variety of teachers at all levels of competence: miserable, boring, mediocre, average, good, and great.

The student can learn something from every teacher, no matter how terrible he appears to be.

These are some of the things I've learned from miserable teachers:

(1) Where the counselor's office is.
(2) How to fill out a drop slip.

These are some of the things I've learned from a boring teacher.

(1) How to sleep with my eyes open.
(2) How to take notes and get next period's math done at the same time.

These are some of the things I've learned from a mediocre teacher:

(1) How to write a good first and last paragraph but not to worry about the middle.
(2) All about Friday night's football game or his career in the Navy.

These are some of the things I've learned from an average teacher:

(1) Exactly what I need to do to get the grade I want.
(2) An average amount of the subject.

These are some of the things I've learned from a good teacher:

(1) To master the skills or the subject.
(2) How to use the resources available outside of class.
(3) How to study the main concepts, because that's what's on the test.
(4) To like whatever it is that we are learning.

Finally, these are some of the things I've learned from a great teacher:

(1) To love what I am learning,
(2) And to know that I want to learn even more.

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NOT BY SCIENTIFIC TECHNOLOGY ALONE

Elizabeth E. Seittelman

At the opening of the decade of the eighties, it is appropriate to review the key topics and issues of the previous decade to comprehend the needs, interests, and concerns of this era and possibly of the future. Two divergent forces dominated the seventies: on the one hand, an increased dependence of society on science and technology, and, on the other, the vigorous reactions of individuals disenchanted and disturbed by the dehumanization process. This conflict resulted in the alienation of many persons different in age, educational and economic backgrounds; **in search of a more fulfilled and enriched life, they demanded recognition as individuals with human and humane rights and dignity.** Frequently, young adults were the standard bearers in this movement. Although some progress resulted from judicial decisions and legislation in the recognition of the legal rights of such special categories of individuals as women, ethnic minorities, the aged, and the handicapped; many, nevertheless, still remained alienated not only from their families, but also from the state.

In the eighties, society depends even more than before on science and technology for the possible solution of such grave national problems as energy conservation, ecology, and the decline of urban cities. With this on-going emphasis on science in this decade, we can expect many people to continue to strive to rediscover and appreciate fully the human and humane elements essential to growth and self realization. By developing a realistic understanding of the complexity of the inscription on the Delphic oracle, "Know Thyself," they will be able to accept themselves as individuals with similarities and differences and also to be recognized and accepted by others and by society as a whole.

This article proposes to examine the role of the individual in relation to the family and to the state in specific selections from classical literature. By identifying the problems, the options available, and the possible consequences of various decisions to the individuals in the suggested readings, young adults may better understand themselves and the world in which they live.

First let us examine the relationship of daughters and their parents. In the Odyssey,(1) a warm understanding rapport exists between Nausicaa and her parents. A young adolescent just aware of men and looking forward to marriage, Nausicaa tactfully tells her dream to her parents. Her father, who fully understands both what she says and what she implies, readily grants her request.

Nausicaa has excellent relationships with her peers, the young girls who go with her to the river to wash the clothes. When she sees the ship-wrecked stranger, she proves herself mature and acts in a manner that is appropriate for a princess. First, unlike her friends, she is unafraid; she accepts him as a suppliant. As she looks at Odysseus glorified by Athena, she wishes for a husband like him.(2)

On the other hand, she is cautious to preserve her good name and her relationship

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with her parents. Although she gives Odysseus directions to the palace, she explains why she cannot accompany him; the townspeople may gossip about her being in the company of a male stranger. She suspects that they may also say that she prefers a stranger as her husband to the local suitors. They will probably further point out that she breaks the local tradition which has parents select their daughters' husbands. (VI, 275-289)

Very much interested in the stranger, Nausicaa informs Odysseus of her mother's influence at court (303-315) and emphasizes the importance of his making a good impression on her since she will play an important role in determining whether or not he will succeed in his homeward journey.

After Odysseus has told his story, Nausicaa's father shares his daughter's reaction to the stranger. He prays to Zeus, Athena, and Apollo that Odysseus remain and become his son-in-law; he likes the kind of man that Odysseus is and finds that Odysseus' views are similar to his own. He promises to give Odysseus a dowry, a home, and various treasures.

The students can analyze and evaluate the criteria applied by Nausicaa and her father in selecting Odysseus as a potential husband. Imagining themselves to be Nausicaa, they can record in their diaries Nausiccaa's reactions when Odysseus has refused her father's offer and asked his help to return to Ithaca.

Next, we will consider the case of another royal daughter's love and filial devotion in a time of grave family adversity. A young woman, Antigone, leads her blind father as they wander abouot. Upon reaching the deme of Colonus, she pleads with the citizens to allow Oedipus to remain; she stresses that her petition is for her father's sake. (Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, 263-269) The citizens fear that Oedipus and his children will bring guilt and pollution upon them; her plea, therefore, is denied.

Antigone does not limit her assistance to helping her father cope with his physical handicap; she also provides moral and emotional support to a crushed and despondent man. Three years after his discovery of his identity, Oedipus is so much discouraged by his wanderings as an exile and by the fratricidal war waged by his sons that he confides to Antigone that he is considering suicide. Antigone comforts her father and urges him not to be afraid of life since "it is brave to face the greatest ills, nor flinch nor turn the back." Oedipus is so dependent on Antigone that he says he will do anything for her, even give up his plans of suicide.

Students can list the range of responsibilities which Antigone assumed for her father. They can discuss how such responsibilities might affect her life and her future. Finally, students should consider whether or not they would voluntarily undertake such responsibilities for a blind exiled parent.

The relationship of mothers and their sons is often depicted as favorable. The story of Cornelia, for example, is interesting and relevant. Cornelia entertains a guest who boasts about her jewels; sending for her young sons, Tiberius and Gaius, and pointing to them, Cornelia declares, "These are my jewels."(3)

Students can compare and contrast the values of the guest and the hostess. Some students may report on Angelica Kauffman's 1785 painting, "Cornelia and her Jewels" (4) which was so popular that she received repeat orders from royalty.

Another aspect of the relationship of parents and their children to be considered is the instance of children who are mature individuals. Thus, for example, Odysseus

has neither seen nor heard about his parents during his homeward journey. When consulting Teiresias in Hades abouot his homeward journey, he sees the shade of his mother, who does not seem to recognize her son. (Odyssey, XI, 140-144) Following Teiresias' directions, Odysseus communicates with his mother, who tearfully asks her son how he entered Hades when still alive. Manifesting her maternal love and concern, she asks Odysseus if he has been wandering since the fall of Troy without seeing his wife at home (155-162). Anticleia tells him of faithful Penelope and his grieving father, Laertes, who lives as a peasant in the country. He lies in the ashes beside the hearth in the winter; in the summer, he sleeps on a pile of fallen leaves under the open sky as he longs for his son's homecoming (187-196).

When Odysseus asks his mother the cause of her death, she tells him that there was no specific illness, but her longing for her great son, for his counsels, and for his loving kindness caused her death (197-203). When Odysseus' attempt to embrace the shade of his mother fails, Anticleia, assuming her role as mother who explains the ways of life, tells him that that is the nature of death.

The students can discuss Odysseus' reactions to the news about the life style of Laertes and examine what other actions Laertes could have taken in his son's absence. Students might prepare a diary entry made by Odysseus on the death of his mother. They could write a human interest story about a Vietnam veteran whose mother died during his tour of duty overseas.

Upon his return to Ithaca, Odysseus reveals his identity to Laertes, who faints (XXIV, 320-324). When he regains consciousness, Laertes resumes his long suspended role of protective parent. He cautions Odysseus against the pending danger from the relatives of the slain suitors. The reunion is complete when three generations, Laertes, Odysseus, and Telemachus, return home for dinner (345-364).

Thereafter, Odysseus assumes a leadership role of father and king. He invites his son to assist him in confronting the relatives of the slain suitors (506-515). Odysseus demonstrates first his respect for his father and then his mature leadership as ruler of Ithaca.

Students can discuss what priorities they would have had upon their return home after twenty years of absence. They can identify the changes, problems, and adjustments required of Odysseus and of his family. Some students may interview returning veterans on these questions.

Sometimes both the parent and the son share a traumatic experience. Thus, at the fall of Troy, Aeneas proves himself a dutiful and affectionate son and father. In their escape from the burning city, Aeneas carries his handicapped father on his shoulders as he leads his young son, Iulus, by the hand. (5)

The scene of the chaotic exodus from a fallen city is familiar today. Students can discuss the conflicts experienced by the survivors and the emotional reactions of these new refugees, similar to the aged Anchises, the orphaned Iulus, and Aeneas, who must assume the roles of both son and father. In the case of both veterans, Odysseus and Aeneas, the significance of leadership and identity should be analyzed.

Occasionally, children consider their parents unjust and question their authority by disobeying them. In a recent news story, a twelve year old Ukranian boy refused to return home with his parents; he appealed to the United States Courts. (6)

In a story from antiquity, Hypermnestra disobeys her father, Danaus, an early king of Egypt who was driven from his country by his brother Aegyptus. With his fifty daughters, Danaus finds haven in Argos. (7) The fifty sons os Aegyptus wish to marry the daughters of Danaus. Since these marriages are considered a means of reconciliation between the brothers, Danaus is compelled to agree. (8) Danaus, however, orders his daughters to stab their husbands on their wedding night. Only Hypermnestra disobeys her father and spares her husband's life because she loves him. Because of this, Hypermnestra is brought to trial for parental disobedience. She is defended by Aphrodite and saved. (9)

Haemon disagrees with his father's condemnation of Antigone to death. At first, with calm self control and respect, Haemon asserts his interest in his father's welfare. He tells Creon that the death sentence of Antigone is not well received by the people. As Haemon pleads Antigone's case, Creon grows angry; his pride increases. Haemon insists on his right to his own opinion and on his right to be heard. Having lost the argument, Haemon rushes out determined to die with his fiance, Antigone. (10)

These examples raise the question of where and under what circumstances children are obliged to obey their parents. What approaches can adults in the parent/child relationship use for conflict resolution? What other options may have been available to Danaus, Creon, Antigone, and Haemon?

As part of our consideration of the individual and the family, it is appropriate to include the relationships of individuals to their siblings. Students can discuss when and to what extent individuals should pursue solely their own interests. What advantages, if any, can be derived by the individual and/or the family when good sibling relationships exist? How can sibling rivalry be defused or channelled for positive action?

Sometimes fundamental and irreconcilable differences arise between siblings. Such is the disagreement between Antigone and Ismene on Antigone's proposed burial of Polynices, which Creon has forbidden on the pain of death by stoning. Ismene presents the traditional arguments against defying Creon: that women are weak and that obedience to the state is mandatory (49-68). Antigone, in a furious rage, scorns Ismene's advice (93-94). When apprehended for her deed, she defiantly declares that her action was premeditated. She asseerts, moreover, that the unwritten law is higher than civil law (450-470). When Ismene declares that she participated in the burial and asks to share her sister's fate, Antigone harshly rejects her offer (536-541).

Students might write a human interest story, "Triple Tragedy Strikes Family." Some should prepare to interview Ismene, Creon, and Teiresias. The group might explore the relevance of these fundamental concepts of Sophocles:

1. Suffering is inevitable.
2. Excess of a virtue is a fault that may lead to disaster.
3. Wisdom comes from suffering

A fatal example of sibling rivalry is found in Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes. Their consuming desire for power leads to the conflict between Polynices and Eteocles, which results in fratricide. After they expel their father, Oedipus, from Thebes, they agree to rule alternately. Eventually, Eteocles refuses to share his power and keeps Polynices in exile. Polynices, in turn, secures military help from the king of Argos and attacks his native land. Determined to rule, Eteocles and Polynices kill each other at the seventh gate. Their ambition generates their excessive hatred,

which not only costs them their lives, but also the death of their sister and the ruin of the family of Creon.

Finally, let us consider the individual and the state. Classical literature provides numerous examples of individuals who give their lives for their country. King Leonidas of Sparta and his three hundred men at the Battle of Thermopylae (12) illustrate this attitude. In their discussions, students can compare and contrast the ancient values reflected in this tribute to the fallen men with current views and attitudes.

> "Go stranger and to Lacedaemon tell
> that here, obeying their behests, we fell."

Students can examine some examples of similar decisions, e.g., the Battle of Masada and the Alamo, to identify the purpose of such an action, the outcomes, and the effects on other people.

Occasionally, in a desperate situation, a citizen is asked to spy for his country. Sinon (13) finds himself in such a situation. He infiltrates Troy and wins its confidence. He, consequently, facilitates the entry of the wooden horse into Troy and the success of its mission.

Students can analyze and discuss Sinon's appeal to Priam, Priam's offer of friendship and hospitality, and the betrayal of Priam's trust and Troy. The moral and ethical issues should be considered. Students should try to determine whether and under what circumstances a soldier may or should undertake such a mission. As part of the study, the mission of Nathan Hale might be reviewed. Students might prepare an interview of Sinon on the day that Troy fell for the series, "You Are There."

Finally, we will consider the defection of an individual motivated solely by personal ambition and pride. Such is the case of Alcibiades (14) who planned the Athenian attack on Sicily. When asked to return to Athens to face trial on charges of desecrating the Hermae, Alcibiades doubted that he would get a fair trial. He, consequently, defected to Sparta, the enemy of Athens. When the Spartans questioned his motives, Alcibiades justified his actions by saying that he had lost an ungrateful country and that he would attack her with all his might.

His defection and the information he made available to Sparta resulted in the greatest Athenian catastrophe in her history. Thousands of Athenians died; others were sold into slavery. Athens lost her freedom.

In their discussion, students might report on the reactions of the Athenian soldiers in the Sicilian War Zone when they learn of Alcibiades' defection. Other students might prepare an interview with Socrates, the teacher of Alcibiades, on his pupil's defection. Students can compared and contrast his case with those of other defectors. (15) Advanced students may report on Plutarch's Life of Alcibiades.

Through this experience in Classical Literature on the topic of individualism, students will have had an opportunity to explore a basic ingredient of learning, i.e. how to understand themselves and the world outside of science (16) which will remain a topic and an issue in the decade of the eighties.

FOOTNOTES

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3. Ella Isabel Harris, Tr. in George E. Duckworth, The Complete Roman Drama, 2 vols., New York: Random House, 1967, vol. 2, p. 562.

4. In Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.

5. James H. Mantinband, tr., Vergil, The Aeneid. New York, Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1964, II, 706-725. Cf. M. Owen Lee, Fathers and Sons in Virgil's Aeneid, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1979; Robert Finlay, "Patroklos, Achilleus, and Peleus: Fathers and Sons in the Iliad, "Classical World 73.5 (Feb. 1980) pp. 267-273.

6. Tibor Machan "Soviet Boy Should Stay," New York Times, August 28, 1980, p. A 19.

7. Aeschylus, The Suppliant Women.

8. This was the plot of The Egyptians, a lost play of Aeschylus.

9. This was the theme of The Danaids, a lost play of the trilogy on this theme by Aeschylus.

10. Antigone, 683-723; 727-763. (In David Green and Richmond Lattimore, eds., Greek Tragedies, Vol. 1, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1960.) Cf. Charles P. Segal, "Sophocles' Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the Antigone," in Thomas Woodard, ed., Sophocles: A Collection of Critical Essays, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1966, pp. 62-85.

11. H. Mac L. Currie, ed., The Individual and the State, Toronto, Hakkert, 1973.

12. Herodotus, Histories, Vii, 201-228.

13. Vergil, Aeneid, II, 57-198.

14. Thcydides, The Histories, VI, 92-93; VII, 74-87.

15. Cf. Philip Taubman's story of David H. Barnett: "Ex-Agent of CIA Pleads Guilty to Selling Data to Soviet Union," New York Times, Oct. 30, 1980, pp. A1 and 24.

16. Cf. Gerald Fraser. "Commission Gives Priority in Education to Humanities," New York Times, Oct. 10, 1980, p. C32.

HOW ADOLESCENTS REACT TO CHANGE: SELECTED EXAMPLES FROM LITERATURE

Osayimwense Osa

Youthful exuberance is usually associated with adolescents. They conform sometimes, and at other times they are non-conformists. Why do adolescents display extremism in their behavior? Why is there a significant number of drug addicts among them? Is the adolescent period really one of stress, frustration and turbulence? Ostensibly, the emphasis laid on the years of youth and especially on adolescence as a social-psychological phenomenon has become greater in recent years. Childhood, boyhood, youth, and maturity are one continuum. Transition from any one of these to the next is not made by all persons at the same time of life, nor with the same suddenness. In some cases it has a superficial flavor of revolution. Adolescence is overtly not a life in itself, but a stage in the total life. Some childhood traits and adulthood traits are fused in the adolescent. Hence Frederick Tracy says:

> There is no characteristic of adolescence
> whose germ may not be found in childhood
> and whose consequences may not be traced
> in maturity and old age.(1)

However, the temperaments of the adolescent and the adult are not the same. Consequently each's response to changes in his life differs.

Complex emotions, such as awe, reverence, gratitude, joy, shame, and pity, and sentiments of moral approval and disapproval, are hardly possible in any well-developed forms in adolescence, obviously on account of their complexity. The adolescent needs time and wealth of experience to cope with his emotions in a rational manner, a fact which differentiates him from the adult who has acquired a wealth of experience over the years. Adolescents are impelled by their primary instincts, and the feeling phase of their instinctive behavior is constituted by the simple emotions of happiness, fear, repulsion, anger, and the like. These simple emotions may be very intense while they last; but whatever their degree of intensity, according to Tracy, "They do not share in the characteristics of the higher emotions, through lack of that experience and mental power which are indispensable to those higher emotions."(2) The foregoing discussion is exemplified in some adolescent novels.

Soon after the end of another school year, Brent McAlister in Crawford's Three Legged Race is exhilarated at the coming summer, and he wants to paint for his uncle George, visit clubs, and, most importantly, visit the island. He thinks, "I'd go crazy by September if we didn't have the island."(3) Unlike Brent, the typical adult will be careful if he has some important events coming up. While visiting at Uncle George's barn, all Brent's grandiose summer plans crumble when he gets a fractured vertebra after landing on a dilapidated trapdoor while chasing his cousin John. He spends a substantial part of the summer in the hospital, where he meets his irrespressible roommate Kirkus Hughes and gets to know Amy. The three of them rap about their

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pasts and share their experiences. They are wholly caugfht up in each other's friendship, and this sweet friendship brings about a change in their emotional health. Depression in the hospital gives way to pleasure. Carried away in this sweet wind of change, they forget their sickness. Kirk and Amy sneak out into the damp air to watch a movie—Amy walking while Kirk is in a wheelchair.

Unlike these adolescents, in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Cicero tells Casca during a storm, "This disturbed night is not to walk in," even though they have an important project in hand. He is conscious of his health and apprehensive of what exposure to the cold, stormy night might cause. But sick Kirk and Amy are not apprehensive of the danger of exposure to the cold because they are glorying in their new friendship. The cold only aggravates Amy's mono, and she dies the next day. Amy's death brings another change in their company. Kirk's and Brent's reactions to her death are permeated by primary instincts which impel them to express their anger and disgust in full. When Jewel tells Kirk, "Amy is dead," Crawford's description explicitly captures Kirk's state of mind:

> A cold wave washed over Brent and left him empty...He grabbed his pillow and smashed it again and again against the wall. He struggled out of bed and grabbed his crutches. Kirk lunged at her (the blood lady) and smashed at the cart with one crutch... He swung again and the blood lady shrank back against the wall. The crutch crashed through the top of the cart, knocking the tops off test tubes...Kirk wailed once and smashed the cart again. It rolled against the wall and he turned it over, kicking at the glass and dripping blood with his bare feet. The glass cut him...He smashed at the broken glass again and again. The blood lady screamed. Kirk had blood in his hair and on his face.(4)

Brent's reaction to Amy's death is similar to that of Kirk. Despite his broken vertebra, he gets up to meet Kirk, who is still "crashing his head again and again against the plaster." In his grief over Amy's death, Brent forgets he is taking a risk in getting up against the doctor's advice. Hence Kirk tells him, "You've got to be a real asshole to get out of bed by yourself in your condition."

Overtly, like Brent and Kirk, Slake finds himself virtually alone after his friend Joseph has been hit by a truck in Felice Holman's Slake's Limbo. Alone in a "hostile" world, as a result of his friend Joseph's death, Slake runs into a subway where he stays for one hundred and twenty-one days. In Robert Cormier's I am The Cheese, when Adam's mother is crushed by the criminals' car, Adam's equilibrium is shattered for a while:

> He lay numb, in a vacuum except for the echo of sounds in his ear and he tried to raise his head from the pavement but couldn't and he wanted to close his eyes but couldn't and he couldn't bear to look at his mother anymore.(5)

In Robert Cormier's The Chocolate War, Jerry finds it difficult to stand his mother's changing or failing health: witnessing the awful alteration of her face, her body, is too much for Jerry to bear, and he sometimes flees her bedroom, ashamed of his weakness and avoiding his father. The difference between Jerry's reaction to the change in his mother's health and his father's emotional maturity is glimpsed in: "Jerry wishes he could be as strong as his father, always in control, masking his sorrow and grief."(6)

Apparently Jerry's emotional maturity is not up to that of his father. Hence his reaction to change is less mature than his father's. Jerry's reaction to the death of his mother is like Kirk's reaction to the death of Amy—one of intense unhappiness and a loss of emotional equilibrium:

> His anger was so deep and sharp in him that it drove out sorrow.
> He wanted to bellow at the world, cry out against her death,
> topple buildings, split the earth open, tear down trees...Jerry
> felt hopeless and abandoned.(7)

Unlike the reaction of the adolescents—Jerry, Kirk, and McAlister—adult reaction to change brought about by death is colored by maturity which has obviously been acquired with time and experience. For example, even at a time when Macbeth's fortunes are rapidly changing—friends deserting him and Scotland about to fall into Malcolm's hands—the news of his wife's death does not unnerve him completely. He receives it with calm like someone who has a sense of death awareness; one of the points of his grief is that her death should have taken place at another time: "She should have died hereafter." He then goes on to philosophize on the brevity of life, a philosophizing that contains some of the most beautiful lines in the corpus of world literature:

> Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing.

Similarly, the death of Brutus's wife does not break him down completely. Instead he receives the news with calm and a disciplined mind which reflect his maturity:

> Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala:
> With meditating that she must die once
> I have the patience to endure it now.

Unlike the adolescents Kirkus Hughes and Brent, Macbeth and Brutus do not vent their sadness over the passing of their wives on anybody.

The adolescent's reaction to change brought about by death is not very different from his reaction to a negative change in a love affair. In Ann Head's Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, in spite of July's parents' disapproval of her love affair with Bo Jo, she still plunges in. An illicit sex affair results in pregnancy, which subsequently forces them to marry. After marriage July and Bo Jo find themselves unhappy. For Bo Jo, the marriage is a setback:

> I was their great white hope, see? My son the college boy!
> And now I'm nothing but a seventeen-year-old punk with a
> wife...The first time I'm in trouble, the very first time...(8)

Soon after their marriage, Grandmother Greher attempts to show July what marriage entails. She shows her husband's wedding gift—a jewel box which contains four slim gold bracelets linked together by a gold chain with faith, forgiveness, humor, and eternal vigilance written on them. These four things are what Grandfather Greher felt

to be the qualities one must strive for in a marriage if it were to be successful. In spite of Grandmother Greher's advice, July is disgusted with the marriage, which to her is tantamount to imprisonment. She thinks of her matrimonial home in terms of an enclosed state:

> I began to feel as though the apartment walls were closing in on me, and when I looked at the windows I could almost see the bars. I dashed out of the door and down the steps and across the garden to Hatty Barnes...(9)

July's gesture of dashing out of her matrimonial home is reminiscent of Brother Lippo's gesture of dashing out of the monastery in Robert Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi." While Lippo's dashing out of the monastery suggests his refusal to be overpowered by traditions, July's dashing out of her matrimonial home suggests her refusal to be saddled by matrimonial responsibilities. In other words, she is not yet mature enough to withstand the change in her life brought about by her sudden wedding. After the death of their baby, July and Bo Jo separate for three years—a period in which they increase their once limited knowledge of love. After the three-year separation, Bo Jo becomes a junior in the university while July works in the bursar's office. She now knows what marriage means. To her, "It (Bo Jo's) was a husband's face, familiar, increasingly beloved '(page 188). Immaturity, which is apparent in adolescent love affairs, is also clear in adolescent's reactions to change in their societies.

Jerry Renault in The Chocolate War disturbs the universe in his blunt refusal to take part in the chocolate sale. He forgets his limitations—he is very weak before the bullies and he is still stunned by his mother's recent death. For his refusal, he is almost beaten to death. Unlike Jerry, Old Alfred Prufrock in T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" knows his limitations. He knows his life has been measured out in insignificant coffee spoons. He knows he is not a hero and was not born to be one. Aware of his inadequacies, he refuses to disturb the universe—he refuses to propose the question of love to one of the women in the room where many changes are going on—where the women come and go. Hence he does not experience pain like young Jerry Renault.

Adolescents do not seem to understand that life consists of meeting and parting. Hence when they part, they are extraordinarily sad. Amy is dead, and Brent feels like crying while leaving his erstwhile roommate, Kirk, in the hospital. The same kind of sadness is felt by Derek Chapman in The Solid Gold Kidd. He confesses his relationship with his friends in the U. S.:

> Sometimes I felt closer to Wendy, Ed, Jeff and Pam than to my own family. I could see each of them in my mind in complete detail, hear their voices, remember how they laughed, and eerily, even know what they'd say about things that were happening to me know.(10)

His schooling in the American school in Paris erodes his proximity to his friends and he finds himself unhappy:

> Why in Paris? Why living with the Harleys. It was a time of intense confusion, of brooding, of thinking. A time of loneliness, a time of waiting.(11)

Similarly, in Joan Lingard's Into Exile, seventeen-year-old Sadie is unhappy—almost mentally deranged—in London after her husband's departure for Belfast as a result of

his father's death. Panicky, she looks for mail from him from Belfast. Kevin's letter to Davis in London, saying that he will not be coming for a while, increases Sadie's anxiety and she rushes to send a telegram: WORRIED BY YOUR LETTER TO MR DAVIS LOVE SADIE. She blames Kevin and the whole Catholic religious faith:

> She felt bitter and lonely that night. She wrote a long letter...to Kevin blaming everything on his religion, telling him it was stupid and wicked and brought nothing but trouble...It was a wild letter but she did not care. Kevin needed to be jolted, to be reminded that she was not going to sit and wait like a cabbage till it came into his head to return.(12)

She goes out in the late night to post this letter, and the next morning she is burdened by guilt: "The letter was on her mind as soon as she awoke. Her stomach moved queasily. Had she said too much? It was one of her faults, launching out with all guns firing and then later regretting it" (p.137). She also regrets that she would not be there to say, "I didn't mean it just as badly as that." She seems to act on impulse or on the spur of the moment.

Unlike Sadie's letter, Tess's letter to Alec in Hardy's Tess of the D'urberville is permeated by calmness and gentleness of tone—a point that marks her as a mature girl—more mature than Sadie at least. Kevin's temporary absence almost destroys Sadie. Her rushed telegram and rushed letter and subsequent feeling of guilt and sleeplessness suggest that Sadie is a complete bundle of nerves. Mature Rita's advice for her, "Easy come, easy go these days...Nothing lasts forever," reflects her maturity of mind. One can infer that Rita would be able to control herself if she were in Sadie's position.

A lesson to be learnt by the adolescent is Rita's concise statement—"Nothing lasts forever." Almost everything, including life, is temporary. A knowledge of this fundamental fact of life is invaluable for adolescents in coping with various stresses arising from the changes in their lives. Rather than breaking down under stress or thinking that happiness is endless, they should know that these conditions are temporary. However, they need time and experience to be emotionally mature enough to cope with changes in their lives.

NOTES

1. Frederick Tracy, Pyschology of Adolescence. New York: Macmillan Co., 1927.

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3. Charles P. Crawford, Three Legged Race. New York: Dell, 1974., p. 11.

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5. Robert Cormier, I am The Cheese. New York: Dell, 1977, p. 208.

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7. Cormier, The Chocolate War, pp.48-49.

8. Ann Head. Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones. New York: Signet, 1967, p. 38.

9. Head, p.93.

10. N.F. Mazer and H. Mazer, The Solid Gold Kidd. New York: Dell, 1977, p. 210.

11. Mazer, p. 203.

12. Joan Lindgard. Into Exile. New York: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1973, pp. 136-137.

MAKING LITERATURE RELEVANT

Bill Killian

The main problem facing the English class of tomorrow is lack of interest. Not in the traditionally boring grammar side of an English course, but in the literature side.

Students need literature because it helps them become thinkers. Not just to read something and accept it, but question it for its underlying meanings and ideas. Obviously, to accomplish these responses, the material must be presented interestingly to the class. The best way for this is classroom discussion.

My sophmore year in English, when we read a novel, we discussed one or two chapters a day every day until we finished the book. My teacher really opened up the hidden meanings of such novels as A Separate Peace, Giants in the Earth, and Red Badge of Courage. A good selection of literature helped, but most of the students came out of that class practically dumbfounded at the numerous themes and philosophies of these major works.

On the other hand, my junior English teacher selected good works (Canterbury Tales, Brave New World) but didn't present them interestingly at all. During her lectures she wouldn't let us question til she was done and would answer her own questions with her answers. I hated this course. I'd really want to question a theory, and she'd say, "Hold til after I'm through."

Of course there are other things, but the main thing is class interest, which I feel can be obtained through a good discussion.

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REFLECTIONS ON WORDSWORTH AND BYRON

William H. Butler

Each of us at one time or another has probably felt he was adopted, because his thoughts, feelings and personality were so different from his parents' that they seemed to be unrelated strangers. This disorientation seems to abate with time.

Further, each of us at one time or another has probably felt he entered this world at the wrong time or that he occupies it in the wrong space.

Some have resolved this latter feeling as General George Patton did, by re-positioning themselves in time and space with belief in reincarnation, which in his case offset the battle he lost at Tunis with the battle he'd won at Carthage two thousand years before.

Others indulge in the Walter Mitty type of escapism in which they project themselves into all the central positions they wish life had placed them in—Steamboat Captain, Surgeon, Financier, Astronaut; Adventurer, Lover, Intellectual or Poet; Scientist, Metaphysicist, Leader or Thinker; Knower or Believer, Actor, not Re-actor; Woo-er or Do-er, not Brewer or Stewer.

I have no wish to place myself into another space and time than I occupy right now—I am happy where I am—but I am delighted to study the Age of Romantics and to find such a climate of thought, coterie of personalities, and expression of feelings so compatible with my own—Love of Nature, Adventure, the Common place and the Faraway place; All of Time, All of Space, the Universe and the Atom; Finity and Infinity, Life and Death; Love itself and Hate as well—I am grateful to find friends who so reflect my own self.

For the purposes of this paper I have chosen Wordsworth and Byron with whom to identify, but only because of the limitations of time and thought I can expend and remain within the confines of this project. I am fascinated by William Blake; and Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats speak to my heart, but I cannot develop them in this paper. Another time, perhaps. Or another space?

With Wordsworth, as with Einstein and Spinoza, I share the feeling of a Consciousness, a Pervading Being, a Presence in the Cosmos, expressed in love of Nature and appreciation of all its aspects.

With Byron, I share the love of adventure he showed in identification with rebel causes, his answering challenges to achieve, such as portrayed in the duplication of

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William H. Butler sells insurance in Phoenix, Arizona. He is also a student at Arizona State University, but hardly a typical one. If one of our challenges as teachers is to convince students of the value of literature in their lives, then we should all rejoice that there are students like Mr. Butler, who, as this paper written for a course in Romantic Poetry demonstrates, have the confidence and the perspective acquired through maturity to see its relevance.

Leander's swim across the Hellespont, his love of romance and love and even, mundanely, his need to watch his weight.

With Wordsworth, my heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky. With Byron, I am compelled to struggle toward the lighthouse on the opposite shore. I feel I have found friends with whom I can share the joy of just being and feeling, to whom I can relate as I savor life with my thoughts and my senses. I feel at home with these men.

What is a Poet? Wordsworth says a Poet is a man speaking to men; a man, true, endowed with more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul than are supposed to be common among mankind, but a man among men, nevertheless.

I am no poet, but I would like to be such a man, able, perhaps not in rhymed meter, but at least in normal communication to more spontaneously express my feelings, powerful or otherwise.

My wife and I have made a pact to communicate our love for each other in such a way, both verbally and non-verbally, with hearts, minds, and bodies, knowing this is how to keep in touch with our relationship and with each other. We hadn't considered our communication to be poetry, but perhaps much of it is.

What is a Hero? Byron left a legacy for Richard Halliburton, Ernest Hemingway, Jacques Cousteau, Antoine St. Exupery, Neil Armstrong, and me to draw from. "Wind, Sand and Stars," "Royal Road to Romance," "Old Man of the Sea," "The Silent World," "One giant step for mankind," and my own small saga of life experiences, are all in his tradition.

Byron and I would have thrilled in a scuba dive together, sharing the raptures of the deep; we would have jointly relished the adventures of trans-Atlantic aircraft navigation during the War with the stars as our guide and the delights of Dakar, Accra, Marrakesh and Algiers our reward. We would have shivered joyously together over the Greenland icecap and baked with glee in Belem at the mouth of the Amazon. And how he'd have loved to finish with me my first half marathon, replacing Leander with Pheidippedes as a hero to emulate.

He would have felt with me dark thoughts of death and heady moments of passion and approved of my penchant for candles, music, and wine. He would have understood the tug I felt to join the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, to be recruited by Col. Sweeney in Montreal for the Eagle Squadron or by Claire Chennault to fly "The Hump," instead of terminating short on the Gold Coast in Equatorial West Africa.

I am glad, with Byron, I am not just so much clay, but blood, bone, marrow, passion, and feeling. I am glad I can say with Wordsworth, "In distant countries I have been," and that I, like him, have "beheld a crowd, a host of golden daffodils." My golden daffodils, however, like the changed forms of Ovid, were towering gold-tinged cumulus clouds viewed at sunset, flying ten thousand feet above the North Atlantic during the War, but they evoked in me the same sense of wonder portrayed by Wordsworth.

I am glad to be a man who can view so much of life as poetry, and I present a

few excerpts from Wordsworth and Byron to show how my life is reflected in their poetry.

A NIGHT-PIECE

The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen.

The skies and the stars are my friends. Lonely photons winging their way from trackless space have guided me many times across the oceans, and the constellations, the planets, and the sun, moon, and stars are known to me by their mythology as well as by their astro-physics. They and the universe they occupy represent to me a magnificent aspect of Creation. When the skies are clear and night has fallen they look at me, and I look at them—we are each magnificent, not insignificant; we each reflect the other's spirit and we each share in the harmony of the universe.

THERE WAS A BOY

. . . .many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone.

The poem contains another thought:

. . . .through that churchyard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together have I stood
Mute—looking at the grave . . .

My visits to the cemetery are not more frequent, but they are taking longer. First it was Dad. Then Mother. Then my sister, Mary. I head an abundant family of my own, but I am the sole survivor of the family of my youth. We were more alike than I'd thought, and I realize I loved them very much. In my business as a life insurance agent I am frequently reminded that each man's death reminds me of my own. I do not fear it; instead, I might regard it as The Ultimate Adventure.

TO MY SISTER

It is the first mild day of March;
Each minute sweeter than before,
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,

With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

Mary's birthday was a March day, as in the poem. She was four years younger than I and died four years ago. I wish it had been possible for us to be closer, but life's barriers are manifold. She loved me, and I think of her—I was her big brother, but her problems were heavy for me. I miss her, and I wish we could have shared one day of idleness. Now Mary's asleep, and the murmuring stream of her life became muted as it entered the Sea of Eternity. Goodnight, my sister; will there be another March day we can share?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
. . .Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore.

It was a sunny summer day off the Mexican peninsula of Baja near the Coronado Islands that I strapped on eighty pounds of equipment and stepped off into eighty feet of water. It was like being a Greek god—man's control no longer stopped with the shore, and he could relish a beautiful water world of swaying kelp rising like undulating trees from the sea floor, Mantas moving majestically like underwater flying carpets, giant golden Girabaldi finning and fan-tailing, and porpoises and seals rowdying like a neighborhood gang. I shall never forget my first scuba dive; Lord Byron, who swam the Hellespont, would have loved it, his lameness conquered with jet-fins and his soul snared by Calypso and Triton. Listen how Wordsworth's imagery captures the experience:

from THE PRELUDE

I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters.

There are darker dimensions of experience in life. One of them, despair, I have encountered.

MY SOUL IS DARK

My soul is dark—Oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
. . . I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,

Or else this heavy heart will burst;
For it hath been by sorrow nursed.

I can recall a deep depression when a creative venture had failed at a more youthful time in my life, and I stood at the grave of my parents and brooded dark thoughts. I know how one feels who might verge on self-destruction, and I bless the native buoyancy that prevailed over my despair. Perhaps Byron's despair was only over a lost love, but that too was a venture that failed, and his despair was real nonetheless.

It would be unfitting, however, to conclude this paper with notes of poetic despair, there being only a few such minor chords in my generally happy song of life. So, more cheerily,

TO A SKY-LARK

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me, till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

In another eighteen years I'll have lived as song as Wordsworth and more than twice as long as Byron, but that will not be the last of my life, and it will remain full until the end.

I am still seeking a Destination, but when I return my atoms to the Universe, I'm sure they will dance to a happy song, and perhaps they'll even compose a poem to offer the Master Poet in their return again to Consciousness, with trailing clouds of glory coruscating in the Infinite Void.

. . . . That might sound a bit flamboyant, but if my atoms are going to represent me, I want them to do it with class. If there were to be a final choice in life only between winding up with a whimper or going down gloriously in flames, I think I'd choose the latter, Romantic that I am.

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH WRITING

Laurel A. Fritz

Soon after I began teaching I was confronted by a classroom of students who demanded to know when they were going to need Shakespeare's plays in the local mine? I replied with a well intended, but obviously unconvincing argument concerning aesthetic awareness and artistic background. I later did some research. I found that a janitor at that same mine started at a salary substantially higher than mine. And he didn't need a high school diploma. At that point I had to re-evaluate my students' question: if possession of a new pick-up truck is their goal, why would they need to study Shakespeare?

Answering this question is an ongoing process for me and for educators in general. In 1907, Jane Addams asserted the importance of widening a student's perceptions in the book Democracy and Social Ethics (MacMillan, N.Y., New York). In her words:

> If the army of school children
> who enter the factories every
> year possessed thoroughly
> vitalized faculties, they might
> do much to lighten this incubus
> of dull factory work which presses
> so heavily upon so large a number
> of our fellow citizens. (p.191)

Addams saw education as a way to give "...the child who enters into industrial life early and stays there permanently...some offset to its monotony and dullness, some historic significance of the part he is taking in the life of the community." (p.192). Addams was correct in her assertions; education can give any person a wider world view. Her concern was that we deal with students where they are, yet give them something more for life than the ability to be a good and efficient worker. Through the teaching of writing we have an opportunity to do this.

We need, however, systems of teaching composition which allow us to lead our students to a wider range of thinking and writing. I suggest Lawrence Kohlberg's "Taxonomy of the Levels of Moral Development" as one such system. I have found it to be an excellent tool in a developmental writing program.

Kohlberg's taxonomy has three levels, each divided into two stages. I offer them here greatly simplified. The first "Pre-Conventional" level has those who, in stage one, respond in order to avoid punishment. In stage two they respond in order to get what they want or most like. The second "Conventional" level has people at stage three who respond basically to gain peer approval. At stage four any response is in accordance with existing rules, in order to avoid censure and resulting guilt. The final "Post-Conventional" stage has people at level five who respond to laws for the good of

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the group. At level six, the highest level, response is dictated by one's conscience.

The advantage of the taxonomy is that it can be presented to and understood by students and it can easily be applied to their own work and thought processes. This allows them the option of advancing up the scale on a personal level and consequently in their composing process. Use of this method is limited only by the almost endless fund of human problems and the modes of writing through which to explore these problems.

As an example of how this works, let's look at a problem many writing teachers face: the use of non-standard English. Assuming the students involved are less than enthusiastic writers, I apply two tactics on the initial assignment: I require that the subject be of high interest to them and that they write in their own jargon or dialect.

This beginning assignment can be anything from a letter to a short play, but the second step is crucial. This same work is next to be prepared for an audience outside their peer group. It is the teacher's responsibility to point out the obvious problem: how are the students to communicate with outsiders while using non-standard English? Turning this problem back on the students gives them the opportunity to advance on Kohlberg's taxonomy. Two things can be accomplished: students can realize their non-standard English is acceptable at home but a hindrance to communication outside their own surroundings, and they can move from stage two (responding so as to get what one wants or most likes) to stage four (responding in accordance with the rules of society). Much of this can happen without the teacher's saying a word; students themselves discover how to make this transition. The teacher's role is to be available for reference and help as they revise their writing into standard English. When this process has been successfully completed, a first look at Kohlberg's scale is in order for the students. My students felt highly rewarded to see the advancement they had made on the scale.

I also suggest that role playing be incorporated with writing to develop critical thinking. This results as students deal with situations in which difficult decisions must be made. Class discussions, small group work, and self-evaluation are all helpful as students learn to work with and understand the reasons for their choices.

Kohlberg's scale could again be useful in follow-up assignments. Students given the opportunity to re-write the points-of-view expressed in the role playing at higher (or, for fun, lower) stages on the scale, will be forced to examine their own thinking and begin to understand how others make decisions. The chance to develop critical thinking becomes possible and a great deal of well-focused, involved writing has been done.

Kohlberg found in his studies that decision making ability could be raised at least a step in school-age children by methods such as role playing, discussion, and home example. I have discovered in my classroom that, using Kohlberg's taxonomy in combination with writing exercises, my students accomplish this same advancement. Students encouraged to write about pick-up trucks as goals and then told to decide where this decision lies on Kohlberg's scale have the opportunity to decide whether this is the level on which they wish to remain. All this can happen without a teacher's ever imposing or even stating his own values. More advanced writing skills develop, and critical thinking emerges.

I don't know that my students will ever choose to spout bits of <u>King Lear</u> at the

mine. I do know that they are aware of a wider range of choices and have improved their ability to write about them. It's my hope that their newly developed critical thinking will remain a part of their daily lives.

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PERSPECTIVES ON CONFERENCES AND THE WRITING PROCESS

Kathleen W. Lampert, David C. Schaberg, and Michael L. Faigen

A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE: Kathleen Lampert

As writing teachers, we hope to help students become effective and confident writers, but we seldom hear fully-developed student responses to our teaching. When I decided to discuss using the writing process as a focus for teaching writing in both literature and composition classes, it seemed logical to ask two of my students to offer their perspectives on my approach. We began by discussing the experiences we had last year. We agreed that writing is a process; that writers work through that process differently; and that as they work through the process, student writers need direction, support, and personal responsibility. We concluded that individual conferences are both the theoretical and practical foundation of a process-centered approach to teaching writing.

All three of us anticipated a two-voice discussion. I would present my theory and classroom practice, then they would respond to it as students. **As our writing process evolved, however, my student consultants became my colleagues, addressing substantive issues of both theory and practice.** Thus, we retain our individual voices here. I will describe briefly my rationale and give some specific details of the approach itself. David and Michael, who worked with me in a junior literature elective, will then address aspects of the theory and method which they find particularly significant.

For the past five years I have been working on integrating recent theory and classroom experience into an approach which elicits lively, substantive student writing. Two aspects of current thought have been especially useful to me: rhetorical theory, and research into the writing process. The concept of rhetorical situation: that every piece of writing is a communication act involving a self (persona), an audience, and a subject which that self wishes to communicate specifically to that audience, enables students to develop a personal involvement in their writing. Recognizing that the writing process involves recursive stages: exploration, drafting for self and audience, re-vision, and editing and publication, helps students develop perspective on, and patience with, their individual processes. Integrating these concepts creates a writing context that is structured without being rigidly defined, that demands attention to specific issues without prescribing the content or timing of that attention.

My role as teacher has changed along with the rationale. I now use presentations to the whole class only to provide the foundation for our shared structure, while most teaching goes on in individual writing conferences. Once I might have taught a whole class on principles of argumentation, paragraph coherence, or using concrete details. Today, I present only basic concepts such as rhetorical situation to the whole class at

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Kathleen Lampert teaches English at Wayland High School, Wayland, Massachusetts. David Schaberg and Michael Faigen are students at Wayland High School. This article is a striking example of fruitful teacher-student collaboration, a challenge for all of us to emulate.

the same time. I teach most other writing concepts, both formal and rhetorical, as they arise in individual student papers. If a student chooses a persuasive purpose, and has problems with structure, then we'll discuss formal argumentation. If a paragraph offers the reader sweeping generalizations or moves in circles, then we have a reason to discuss use of detail or transitional devices. Now my role is to enter my students' writing processes, offering them the knowledge they need at different stages of the process to grow as writers, without imposing my teaching process on them.

How does this rationale operate in my classes? I spend only about 10-15% of my time in full class presentations. After I have introduced rhetorical situation, I require that students identify a full rhetorical situation and explore each element in it, however tentatively, before they begin to draft any piece of non-fiction. If I am requiring a form they are unfamiliar with, I also introduce that form in two ways. First I discuss those characteristics which distinguish it from other modes of discourse they have encountered, with special emphasis on the relationship between form and rhetorical situation. In introducing the reflective essay, for example, I might distinguish it from explanatory writing by pointing out the absence of "logical" structuring principles and the important role the writer's voice plays both in controlling structure and in suggesting levels of meaning. Next I present students with a range of examples of that form and we discuss how they illustrate or contradict the general principles. Students can then use their understanding of rhetorical situation and formal principles to begin exploring their writing task, including their subject, their audience's needs and expectations, their own role, and the shape of their presentation. This kind of structured exploration gives students some support and direction, but also respects the integrity of their individual approaches.

Once students have begun defining and exploring their writing tasks, we work together in conferences. I usually allow about two weeks between when I assign a piece of writing and its due date, and I see students throughout this period. Often, I require students to submit notes on their rhetorical situations early in the process. We use conferences on those notes to identify problems in their understanding of audience or topic. By requiring notes I also emphasize the need for extensive exploration before writing. I collect these notes and at least two drafts along with the final paper, and so encourage students to discriminate between drafts-for-audience and drafts-for-self, and to identify problems in drafts for which conferences would be useful. In these conferences we discuss individual structural problems. Learning about general writing issues, such as unity and coherence or movement, is much more likely to occur when students need ways of dealing with immediate problems. Later in the process, we may polish rough spots in voice or style.

LIMITS OF CLASSROOM PRACTICE: David Schaberg

As I considered the function of classroom or "stand-up" teaching time in a conference-centered approach. I realized that although conferences are the most exciting and productive part of the process, the classroom presentation is still an important beginning. The teacher must determine the amount of this introductory learning with care so that it will not leave students either so informed that their possibilities of expression are limited or so uninformed that they cannot begin to write. If, in presenting the reflective essay, my teacher had concentrated on structure or had given us many similar examples, we might have learned a formula for writing. This formula would have limited us during the conference and revision process. What

students don't know won't hinder them—from writing according to their own sense of expression, from altering typical characteristics of the form, or from innovating. For me, it was most often innovation that made the writing process exciting; since I was somewhat ignorant of what was expected of a form, I never feared to experiment and enjoyed solving problems which I considered unique to my topic and rhetorical situation. If, at the other extreme, our teacher had taught us much less than she did, I believe we would not have known what we were writing; a certain amount of ignorance was necessary, even beneficial, but too much, and we would have been lost.

CONFERENCE AS APPLICATION OF THEORY: Michael Faigen

Both the writing process and rhetorical theory were useful tools for me in that they provided the mechanism for approaching writing, methods for translating thought onto paper. The writing process served as a defined procedure for ordered writing, and rhetorical theory provided a flexible process for dealing with individual aspects of my writing. Yet, they still lacked the personal touch which writing deserves and requires. The writing process and rhetorical theory do not offer student writers any means for dealing with problems specific to their writing. They offer no solutions for problems which student writers may encounter trying to establish individual voices. This is where writing conferences can become a key in teaching writing. Students no longer work with a model based in theory. Instead they work with a problem piece of writing, one not all laid out like the professional pieces discussed in the classroom. The conference transforms the writing process and rhetorical theory into practical application.

Making conferences the major place of learning may be difficult for some teachers and students to accept, especially those students who are used to doing well in the classroom. At the beginning of the year I was reluctant to come for a conference. I viewed conferences as extra help, something for problem students. I was concerned that my teacher would write my paper for me. My teacher's persistent "Let's talk about it," though, written as the last comment on my papers, persuaded me to come for a conference. The more conferences I went to, the more I understood their worth.

Because they offer individual attention, conferences enable students to learn many things that would be impossible to teach in the classroom. Perhaps the most valuable thing students can learn is an understanding of their mistakes. The teacher finding problems in a student's paper is only the first step in helping the student writer. Certainly one cannot correct an error until one knows that there is an error to correct. Yet comments which simply identify problems do not do enough to give students the understanding they need to fully solve a writing problem. Understanding means that student writers agree that a problem does exist. The conference provides that discussion, the necessary give and take, which aids students in reaching that understanding.

Conferences become a cooperation. The teacher's ideas do not dominate the conference. Rather students assimilate the teacher's knowledge; they learn. The teacher contributes experience in the form of advice, and the students contribute their own perception and intuition about the problem. Because the goal of the conference is not to develop pat answers to be handed to the students, students gain a better understanding of writing in general. In a conference teacher and student arrive at alternative methods of solution and discuss the implications which each choice would

have if used in the paper. In my conferences we discussed these implications using the vocabulary of rhetorical theory. When I became better skilled at applying rhetorical theory, I began to see how voice, audience, and the relation between the two shaped and flavored my writing. By understanding implication I was better able to choose my structure and words. Not only did I have this tool called rhetorical theory but through conferences I discovered how to use it for what I wanted.

THE CONFERENCE AND THE TEACHER: David Schaberg

Conferences not only help students solve writing problems, but also help teachers learn about teaching. First, teachers can assess how well they determined the amount of in-class teaching of a form. If students ask general questions about the form, and seem uncertain about the rhetorical situation, then perhaps not enough has been taught. If they raise problems that could easily be solved by a change in structure or strategy, and seem confused that such solutions are acceptable, they may believe they are writing from a formula, which indicates that they have been taught too much. If necessary, the teacher may alter the plan for the next teaching of the form according to what the conferences indicate.

Second, when conducting conferences, the teacher can learn how far students have progressed in their own writing processes, and can use this knowledge. The students may encounter problems as they draft; when working with these problems, the teacher must realize that they are part of the drafting phase. The teacher responds to problems according to where students are in their individual processes of composition.

Third, the teacher can learn how not to solve problems for students, though a solution may seem readily apparent. A teacher can point out problems, suggest ways that the students might discover solutions, and approve when they do that, but must never give them those solutions, or they will not learn to deal with their own writing problems, to write. The conference is not an easy thing for the teacher; again teaching and individual learning are being balanced, and writing processes and the sensitive non-explicit role need to be kept in mind.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE PROCESS: A Collaboration

Student involvement

For some students, already interested in learning to write, the conference system provides a valuable chance to work out problems throughout the writing process. For others, since it requires preparation, a conference may force that involvement; students may only wish to avoid the embarrassment of having nothing to say, or may actually be encouraged to write by the opportunity for conference. Most students, offered a series of conferences, will become responsible for their own writing processes.

The Teacher's Role

In conference, the teacher takes on a new role. Instead of being a lecturer, whose every word is indisputable truth, as students might pereceive the teacher-in-classroom, the teacher-in-conference is a co-operator, a colleague, working with the student toward the solution of writing problems. The teacher learns to spend more time listening than talking. As a support and sounding board for writing problems, the teacher will need to use some care in helping the student to reach solutions; if students do not learn about solving writing problems independently, then they do not learn to write. Teacher mistakes in conference are inevitable; not all conferences can be completely successful, not all writing probems easily solved. Experience can improve conference skills and reduce the occurrence of mistakes.

Teacher Time

Teachers could apply the principles we've emphasized here: student responsibility for process and product, and teacher support in that process, in a number of ways, depending on curriculum structure and time availability. Class teaching time (and related preparation time) are naturally reduced as emphasis on conferences increases. Time spent reading and commenting on student papers can also be used more efficiently, since teachers are already familiar with the problems most students are confronting in those papers. By responding directly to problems specifically defined in conferences, teachers can also reduce the kinds of over-correction that cost them time, and often simply frustrate students. If outside-of-class conference time is limited, teachers can explore ways to use in-class conferences. Students can adapt to regularly scheduled in-class conferences, and also develop their skills in peer-conferencing, especially if they already participate actively in their own conferences. Holistic scoring sessions for the whole class can also develop students' confidence in their own responses to peer writing. **Assuming that the process itself is the learning situation, it also makes sense to consider reducing the total number of papers assigned since students need a lot of time to work effectively through their process.** Assuming that the process itself is the learning situation, it also makes sense to consider reducing the total number of papers assigned since students need a lot of time to work effectively through their process. Finally, individual teachers who decide to explore ways to use conferences will find that specific procedures suited to their needs evolve as they work with this approach.

Teacher learning

If extensive conferences make special demands on teachers, they also offer rewards. The teacher who listens can learn much about writing and the writing process. Because students are given free choice of subject, and often of form, no two conferences raise the same writing problems in the same way. The teacher has a rare opportunity to see that apparently homogeneous issues of logic, concreteness, and coherence are as diverse as the individuals who create them in their writing. This variety challenges teachers, but it also provides an alternative to correcting a set of sixty lifeless essays.

Student Confidence

The opportunity for individual attention and affirmation in the conference builds confidence for student writers. The mere act of meeting with their teacher to confront a writing problem suggests for students that the problems are not insurmountable. Confidence does not mean that failure is not unexpected but is part of the writing process, since writing suggests revision. Students may know that revision is expected and necessary, but changing that belief into practice is difficult. The ability to risk failure leaves students less susceptible to the natural tendency to avoid writing as long as possible. Confidence frees student writers from dull writing because, with confidence, they have a better chance of maintaining their own voices.

Abstract concepts about complex processes such as writing seldom translate satisfactorily into classroom reality. As we wrote this article, however, we experienced the dual pleasures of discovering first, that theory shaped concrete activities which helped us teach and learn; and second, that our writing process mirrored the theoretical inferences we'd drawn from our classroom experience. The approach we describe here cannot eliminate the frustrations produced by teaching writing and by writing itself; it does, perhaps, suggest that students and teachers can work together to reduce those frustrations and increase the satisfaction which should also be inherent in writing.

CURRICULUM GUIDES AND COMPETENCY TESTING: CALL FOR MATERIALS

The NCTE Committee to Evaluate Curriculum Guidelines and Competency Requirements is gathering as many materials as possible related to competency testing in language arts. As the materials arrive, committee members will selectively analyze existing documents on competency objectives, guidelines, and (when available) tests in light of current knowledge about the teaching and testing of English language arts. Among the committee's goals are direct feedback to mandating agencies, publication and dissemination of critique summaries and submission of guidelines for possible inclusion in the ERIC system.

Would you kindly send copies of your district or state competency testing guidelines and other pertinent materials (all areas of language arts, K-13) to Imogene Springer at NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. Thank you.

The goals of the NCTE Committee to Evaluate Curriculum Guidelines and Competency Requirements include evaluating curriculum materials as a service to schools; identifying outstanding curriculum materials for display at the NCTE Annual Convention; compiling an annotated list of outstanding curriculum materials available for purchase by other schools. School districts wishing to have curriculum guides evaluated should mail two copies to Imogene Springer, Chair, at NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. Enclose a cover letter explaining the background behind the development of the guide--personal statements that will help the evaluator get a "feel" for the district. Also, submit general information about the school population (ethnic groups, socio-economic), and identify those who produced the curriculum materials.

THE BEGINNINGS OF TALENT: CASE IN POINT

Alice Glarden Brand

Writing as a way of learning has become a keystone of the profession. Georges Gusdorf, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Carl Rogers said it each in his own way. E.M. Forster said it best. It is the platform on which the interdisciplinary writing movement rests. It is a guiding principle for research in cognition, linguistics, and the humanistic psychologies. At the pedagogical level, the expression refers to the Brunerian discovery of the world through the structure of the items that constitute its business. In its existential sense, writing is one of the symbolic ways we try to render intelligible the meaning of life, the reason of death, the cycle of things, and the place of self in that cycle. This last became synonymous with the personal growth paradigm which in turn figured centrally in the Dartmouth conference and in the period of psychosocial enlightenment that followed and prompted my research.

Two years ago I wrote a book about using writing as a way of social and emotional learning. At the time my purpose was to make a case for using personal writing for personal growth. My work reported on a program that provided for such experiences. Eight secondary school students participated in a five-month, intensive personal writing program. After objective and naturalistic analyses, I concluded that three students resisted deep engagement in personal growth writing and five studentsd experienced varying degrees of social and emotional enhancement through writing—two of whom exemplified the purposes of the program. It helped them learn more about themselves, explore some life questions, solve some problems of daily living, and discharge some tensions. My book, Therapy in Writing, details this progress.

I never imagined that, by mere serendipity, the program would be delivered not of the therapeutically ready (in the holistic sense) or the therapeutically reluctant but of a third sort, Diane—the proverbial natural. Diane's writing was impressive in its honesty and detail, unmistakable in its elasticity and spirit. Why then did she not appear in the chapters of my book given over to individuals? The first and most obvious reason was space restriction. The second was insufficient contrast. Diane's material did not provide as striking a transformation as the writings of the two students I did profile. Diane was not a student whose social and emotional development the program seemed to have much to do with. Diane was not a student whose fluency and felicity of language the program could take major credit for. It was as though she had been at the brink for years, already thinking about commonplace experiences in uncommon ways. The program merely gave her permission, gave her place.

Of course, maybe it was too early to tell; Diane still had a few more years in the system. Maybe her gift was more in managing to escape academic suffocation—a gift in itself, never mind the writing. It reminds me of a Picasso quotation: "Once I drew like Raphael. But it has taken me a whole lifetime to learn to draw like a child." We know the stage in the life cycle that Diane was then in. She was 14 years old and writing appropriately like one. But one wonders why in the phylogeny of writing it seems that so many of us must pass through, as Shaughnessy states, a stage of

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formalese that echoes the bombastic styles of more experienced writers in order to acquire our own mature style. And once there, like Picasso, complex ideas may be expressed in more elemental terms. **Must our expository selves first be pried away from our expressive selves in order to know the difference between the two?** Must Diane's unabashed illuminations be abandoned somewhere along the academic line before they are restored later on (if at all)? Are we better writers for having gone through that stage? Or is our writing otherwise considered simplistic but not artful? One wonders if "Engfish" is indeed an institutional mandate, contrivance, or part of the natural course of cognitive events.

In any case, Diane is a student who has not yet arrived at that stage. Those of us who have come full circle would do well to note her transparency, her forthright insights, the relaxed, natural style of her written voice.

Let me explain. Writers like Diane do not have to start reclaiming the parts of themselves that some of us were trained to deny. They are naive enough (or wise enough) to do writing as an egocentric enterprise insofar as their deep down knowing is the centrifugal center for everything else that occurs to them. They have a gift for saying, as they claim of poets, what most of us barely permit ourselves to think. Remember, it is not so much the informational content. It is not so much originality as it is bravery. Good writing is risky business. Young writers like Diane have unusual access to themselves. Their writing actually produces ideas; and they are not afraid to declare them. They startle us with their observations. The writing simply delivers the goods.

So what, you may say, Diane is no different from my John, Debbie, or Carol. And I'm sure that is true. We have all had Dianes at one time or another in our careers. But we don't have enough of them. We don't have enough students that they never stand in quite the same relationship to the world again once they have come to certain ideas, who sense the increase in themselves once they have said certain things. We don't have enough students who sense that they never knew more about what they were writing than at the moment they were writing it. We don't have enough students who sense that so much of experience is lost to them without such writing.

Yet good teachers are not interested in producing great writers. They are not expected to turn students into embryonic professional writers with unfailing fluency, disciplined thought, and a discriminating sense of style. But good teachers have an intuitive sense of what is quality writing. And the job of a teacher is to recognize promising work and keep it going.

So what I would like you to do first with Diane's work is enjoy it as you might a Peanuts cartoon or a Zindel dialogue, an apprentice Woody Allen or Judith Viorst. Then I would like you to take Diane's work to your students and help them get acquainted with her. Say to them: "This is one way Diane knows herself and one way we can get to know her. Look at what we can learn about ourselves if we can say these things. Imagine how we can think about other things if we can write these things about ourselves."

Let me tell you about Diane. She was a small, vivacious girl, a conscientious student, and an active member of the community. At the time I taught Diane, she was involved in her church and did volunteer work at a local nursing home through the Girl Scouts. It has been several years since I last saw Diane. I do not know what she is doing now, whether or not she is still writing, still fighting with her sister, or has grown any taller. I do however know some things we can learn from Diane that we

should never allow the school system to deprive our writing of: its (1) emotionality, (2) honesty, (3) particularity, and (4) personal quality.

Emotionality

Promising writing is fueled by feeling. Diane was first among the program participants to verbalize the disparity between the happiness she thought she was supposed to feel and the anger that she actually felt. During opening sessions she seemed to have no trouble making a midcourse corrections; happiness was in fact finding out how important it was to say what you meant to say and then saying it.

> Happiness is all sorts of things to me. I'm just going to tell you about things I like. Well, you already know I love backpacking and camping. I like outdoor things like sports. Soccer and swimming I like best. Happiness is also when you do something better than another person. I feel good all over and then do a bit better. To tell you the truth I'm sick of writing about things I like. I wrote about these things in 5th, 6th, 7th grades and now I'm doing it in 8th. I'm not mad about you I couldv'e picked somedthing else. I'm going to write about that thing I feel anger but/and often exress. . . (whatever). When I'm mad and I yell a little bit, I take it out on my mom. She's a nice "kid". I guess she understands my problem and accepts it. When I'm mad I sometimes go to my room and listen to the radio and clean and when I'm mad and start cleaning theres no stopping me. I think I do this to get my mind off my anger. I really don't like being angry but sometimes its good to let your emotions out. If everybody in the world were never angry this world would be boring and less challenging in making your own life.

Unlike the above piece in which Diane addressed her anger almost proudly, she treated remorse with deference and confusion. In the passage that follows, Diane tracks the responses which trigger her distress and her writing. Her associations bring her to several frontiers. She talks about the indiscriminate suffering of cancer victims as well as of those close to them. She wonders about the constancy of friendship. She takes on the role of her friend, acknowledging what calls friendship into question, and then she reaffirms her loyalty. (She also mentions in passing the therapeutic benefits of her writing.) She is more subdued and clinical here. The emotional level is subtle but the tenor of her concern is unequivocal.

> I got a stomach ache ever since this morning on the bus stop. Maybe because I'm upset. Today well, really this morning, my mom called up grandma. She found out that Aunt Anne has cancer. It's all on her neck and shoulder. My mom was very upset. I hope my Aunt doesn't have to suffer. Every one else has to suffer also but I don't want her to go through it all again. Her best friend died I think in 75 -no 76. Well, any way Mrs. Musto had cancer and suffered for three years. My mom didn't have the cancer but I know she suffered. It took her a long time to recoperate, I don't think she's ever going to get over it because I still can't. She was Barbara's mother. Barbara never talks about it. I wonder how she feels. She is still my best friend and not because I feel sorry for her. I've never written about this before. I don't know if it's good or bad for me. I

could keep on writing about this forever. Maybe this could become a log. I'm going to write about it on white paper and see how it comes out.*

Honesty

As would be expected, the disquiet of adolescence often crystallizes around siblings. Over a three week period, Diane pursued a younger sister by correspondence--probably no better form to inspire authenticity. We see in Diane's word choices very specific adjustments for her reader. Diane spins a couple of metaphors, reminds herself that her sister may not understand, then follows with a brief explanation. She also refers to their mother in the familiar form as "mommie" not as "my mother" like my other students who were writing letters to family members. She owns up to her share of the provoking behavior but uses the letter as a way of unloading a stockpile of resentments. She is conniving if not patently diabolical. At the same time however Diane does seek some rapproachement. She invites Karen to enter into a written exchange to settle differences. The co-existence of Diane's drive for control as well as her desire to come to terms with her sister has an impassioned ring of truth. Here is the last and strongest of those communications:

Dear Karen,

I'm going to come straight out with it. We don't understand each other. It seems like my brain is on pluto and yours is on earth. To communicate we use a C.B. and the wires are short circuited. The wires needs repairing and we have to fix them up. This is like a comparison of our relationship. We could give each other lists. On the lists we could write what bugs each other. After they are done we could switch them and read it over. We could stop bugging each other if we know what bugs us. Well, do not tell any body! This is top secret!! (corny!) Do not tell Mommie - repeat do not tell Mommie or Janice for that matter. Everything I do you have to hit me or complain. I hit you because I have to defend myself. You also tell Mommie everything. That's why the kids up the block don't like you. When you get mad you yell out secrets I told you. That's why I don't tell you anything. You have to get control. You can't tell anybody because you have to decide on your own. Don't consult mommie. Well, here is something you shouldn't do. Never tell anybody any secrets. Anyway give me a note if you want to do it or not.

Diane is loud and brassy. Her writing is rough and ready. She means business. Although her letters were in fact sent, they apparently made little impact. Several weeks later Diane recounted another run-in with Karen. I note it because it documents casually but candidly the self-management and self-repair experienced on at least two levels. Diane substitutes a nonviolent, symbolic behavior for a violent act which she then describes through the linguistic symbol.

I forgot Saturday Karen and I had a fight again. I stormed out of the house and started to whittle. I kept thing thinking Karen was the branch. I think I'm going to ignore her so I won't get bugged so much.

Adolescence is the first period in life that individuals hold up for examination their doings and believings. They also learn about the more creative uses of defense and equivocation. At another time Diane talked about honesty itself. Her reflections on lying are not exotic and spiritual exercises. They are moral, realistic, and playful. Diane knew her rights and wrongs (I suspect that a dutiful upbringing saw to that). Fluent youngsters draw on their experiences however homely and familiar. Here they enable Diane to amplify her perspectives-to justify positions in between categorical rights and wrongs. For all intents and purposes, we have caught Diane in the process of constructing her personal world view. Isn't that precisely the way exposition should begin?

> I lie very seldom. When I do lie it's usually during a fight with my sister. Well, it's not really lying—it's exagerating quite a bit. If she punched me I'll make it sound terrible. But — sometimes it hurts real bad and she goes "I just tapped you!" That gets me sick. I wonder how many people lie. I guess everybody but, I mean how much do they lie. If it's once in a while or every minute of their life. Anyway lying is bad but sometimes it comes in handy. For instance, you got a rip in the seam of your gym shorts because you are "plump" or "full". So you say to your gym teacher "I can't play today because my clothes are in the wash". Lying can become a problem because it will become habit forming. Nobody will believe you—like the boy who cried wolf.

Particularity

Diane had an knack for paying clearheaded attention to detail. Ideas and things probably never brought into relation before tumbled out of her effortlessly: a pen was a poem on a stick; strolling on the beach was like walking on Corn Chex. Though a high degree of specificity permeated all Diane's material, I want to share with you the way she treated it in verse form. At one point in the program she wrote a poem about her beliefs in general and about friendship and materialism in particular. The poem showcases her ability to alternate judiciously between the general and the specific through a blend of imagistic opposites.

This Poem

This Poem is about FRIendship
It talks about Diane FRANcavilla
And BARBARA MUSTO
Some parts are FAN TAS tic
Some parts are decomposed like a
dead squirrel lying on the road.
Some parts are in between.

This poem talks about MONEY
the bills are in Fives ANd tens
Some parts are valuable like life
Some parts are worthless like an old doll
Some parts are in between.

This poem talks about lonliness

lonliness like an ant without a colony
some parts are tiptop like a neatly cleaned bedroom
some parts are cold like wet mittens in winter
some parts are in between
This poem goes just like this

The Personal

Diane had an untutored sense of the comic, the ironic, the rhetorical. Everything she experienced was a potential topic. The world was her realm and everything in it worthy of comment. Just as we all are graduate students of ourselves, Diane waxed most prophetic when she wrote about her personal self. However, while so many of our students move from childhood to their adult years with feelings of pessimism, cynicism, and despair, Diane confronted seemly troublesome parts of herself with good-humored perceptivity. The pieces that follow are unpolished but to my mind remarkable, because their originality, intimacy, and vitality counterbalance the national obsession for correctness and reverence for propriety that virtually paralyzes writing.

The part in my hair is like a road on a highway meandering someplace or trying to get to the back of my head. Sometimes it gets lost on the way there and I have to straighten it out. Other times the road is quite curvey and hard to control. But there are times when the road is straight and there are no buckles in it. Buckles are very rare. They occur when I'm playing baseball and the ball hits my head on my part.

My highway is now in the middle of my head because a person gets sick of it on the same side for 5 years. Sometimes during the summer I would switch back and forth. Now I'm going to keep my part in the middle until I get sick of it. Mabe I can have it halfway in the middle and halfway on the side. That's a thought.

In the beginning this is going to be boring but, at the end there will be a spark in this writing. This is about Short People, First off I grew 2 inches over the summer—which I am very delighted. Second, I don't know why people keep asking why a person is so short. There are two very simple, logical reasons. The first reason is: if your mother, father, grandmother and grandfather are short, then your answer is heredity! The second reason is simply: because God made you that way. Well, here comes the spark in the writing (ready for this?!) Short people are: Extraordinary, outstanding, eye-catching, marvelous, phenomenal, well known (Sammy Davis Jr., Paul Williams and me!) incredible, inconcievable, rare, wonderful, fabulous, remarkable, spectacular, legendary, striking, superb, and finally, as Mrs. Brand puts it, sublime. (howd ya like that!)

Clothes are a problem to me. I don't have much of a selection because I'm in between sizes and I don't know what size I wear. It's either a size 12 or 14. Some 12's are gigantic and then some 14's are too tight. If you can figure out why tell me.

If I go in the girls department all the clothes fit good but are babyish. My mom won't buy them because they are going to shrink and money is going to waste. In the junior high department everything is much too big or a little old for me. I guess I just have to wait, and grow more in every direction, up, down, and sideways.

Oh—this really takes the cake. I wanted to buy a pair of navy blue polyester pants. I took a size 12 and 14 into the dressing room. you know what happened—I end up with a size 10! I couldn't believe it. We didn't buy the pants because the seam by the hip puffed out and I looked like a jockey.

I have no solutions but wait to grow. My mom would put darts in and hems. I don't think that's a good solution because I'd look like Frankenstein—all sewed up!

Diane's mother once told me that Diane could write about string. Here's one of her best strings:

As you can see I took the typewriter out. Thank God it is not dusty. My mom cleaned it out last year before we put it back. It seems different from last year. It seems smaller, mabey because I grew. As you can see the ribbon is not too great. By the way the name of this typewriter is REMINGTON. I have to rewrite this over. This is really wiered writing because half of these sentences are not on the line. Well, getting back to the ink ribbon story. I said that the ribbon was a story within itself. The ribbon has the imprints of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks. With all these things to communicate with a person can go writing on forever like a babbling brook, (this seems to waste paper). A brook is always changeing. You can form something different every time whether it is a story, poem, or just plain writing. It is funny thing though, when something you type does not come out right or the way you do not want it the ribbon seems to know that you do not want it there because the ink comes on very light. I just took a look at the ribbon and it is on the last oomph of energy. The material is dried out, there is hardly any ink left. It seems like it is doing it for me. You know something - a ribbon seems to reveal a face. It has wrinkles, it is dried, and every crosssection of a weave are like the eyes THIS is amazing. If a person really stares at it you can see something like the eyes. They are all looking intently at you. Well if you get a chance look at the ribbon on your typewriter. (I think that blotch was the last spurt of energy left).

REDISCOVERING THE FORGOTTEN, THE FAMILIAR

Criss E. Cannady

I. The Back Road

When I first arrived at Eastern Arizona College to direct the Creative Writing Program, I wondered how anyone could even think of such an endeavor in a county with less than 12,000 people, with a college enrollment of less than 1,000.

But there were advantages to teaching at a small, rural community college besides knowing the UPS man and having the bag-boy carry out my groceries. For one, I could get to school in ten minutes. (If I didn't have the misfortune of driving behind a tractor or a thresher, I could be at school in six minutes.) Second, I learned something more about teaching than lesson plans and grades; I learned something more from my students than their names, social security numbers, and academic plans for the future.

Three years ago, fresh out of grad-school, with my assignments packed in my briefcase, I strolled into the English Office to look at the fall registration list. Only two students were signed up for Poetry Writing. Since I had already moved into my apartment, paid the month's rent, and had my telephone installed, I decided to stay and face the depressing consequence of having to teach nothing but composition courses. (Luckily, the Introduction to Creative Writing class did meet, thanks to my department chairman's efforts.

But relief was in sight. By spring semester, through chance, community need, good karma—my poetry class had students enrolled. There were ten: seven were women in their thirties and forties. Before that spring semester arrived, I did not know that my best students would not be full-time ones enrolled in my creative writing curriculum, but women who were making room in their lives to write.

As in most writer's workshops, my Poetry Writing, English 50, had writing and reading assignments and lots of sharing of each student's work—including, sometimes, my own. Each week we discussed imagery and sound in poems, discovering that specifics and details—not abstract statements—make for good poetry. I would read them Richard Hugo, Maxine Kumin, Gary Snyder, William Stafford—poets who rely on landscape for giving their poems imagery to correspond with emotional concerns. And, of course, we talked about the purpose and strategy behind the individual poems written for the class, and why a particular poem failed or succeeded. However, unlike most workshops I have been in, these women did not compete against one another; rather they encouraged each other. Perhaps the poems written for the class aren't perfect, and perhaps some of them reveal some tell-tale signs of "assignments," but the majority of them are successful in being true to the writer's own world of images and dreams. (The poems I have included at the end of this article were chosen for their emotional risk supported by good details, by a sense of place.)

Thinking back to nearly three years ago or even a year ago, I can't quite remember what I specifically said to those students. I have notes jotted down on

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Criss Cannady is a free-lance teacher and writer, now living in Van Nuys, California. In these 2 pieces, she shares with us some past experiences in teaching poetry writing to older students.

poems and worksheets. It is what each poet says in her poems that I value most and remember; **that poetry makes us re-examine the familiar, the overlooked places in our lives.** From my students, I learned that good poems can occur whenever we take risks to know ourselves and others. And I, for one, learned a great deal about poetry and teaching by taking the "back road" and letting others show me part of the way.

July

Swollen with my 6th pregnancy
July has wrestled away my strength
I remember another summer in Pacoima
When Sharon Sickler and I scrambled barefoot
Through the scab stickers in Benham's field.
"This'll prove you're really tough."
The tar and gravel on Montegue Street
Heated and softened
Staining our feet.
"If you're really brave you'll stand on the street
Til you get blisters."
25 years later, like Sharon,
This July heat dares me
To prove myself.

— Karen Johnson, September 15, 1978

Dear Myra,

It's been so long since you were here
and we walked in the desert
and picked prickly pears together.
On the day you left, as you packed the Masa Harina
and the purple cactus juice,
I felt you put part of me into your suitcase
I snuggled with your Arizona souvenirs
and was glad to go to Asheville.
You might need me some cold day.

And now the snow covers your pine trees.
You drink coffee and read a book by the fireplace,
while I'm outdoors each day;
my face still brown from the sun,
I see the tracks where we hiked.
Desert rains will soon hide them.
I try to step in your prints,
it's like touching you.

— Paula Mansur, April, 1979

Wilderness Woman

I have your chair
the one the Norwegian brothers made.
Great-uncle Fred brought it home on his back.
Blind, you rocked and knitted socks,
handkerchief lace
those last twenty years.

First white woman across the Snake River
you obeyed a Mormon prophet's call
sharing husband with other wife
raising eleven children.

We stripped gray-green paint away and found
seven woods, hand carved and pinned.
Craftsmen made a chair from what was there.

On days when I can't match my reach
I sit in your little chair
and know the weight of what was there.
— Delores Christensen, October, 1979

Blackbirds

I remember the blackbirds
rocking in the cattails,
haggling and arguing
over the hierarchy of
their swaying perches;
the brilliant flash of scarlet wings
in their musical chair ritual.

Then at some unseen signal
they would mount to the air
in a chattering, fluttering
cloud of ebony,

and leave me
standing barefoot
on the warm, grey planks
of the pondboard.
— Carol Rodriquez, February, 1979

I Remember, I Remember

II.

When Channel 5, Phoenix, decided to tape for television my teaching poetry one morning at Gila Pueblo Nursing Home, Globe, Arizona, all I could think about was what to wear and how to get there—particularly what to wear—and the fact I had never taught poetry to the elderly, never in a nursing home, and never before studio

cameras. Furthermore, I only had two hours at the nursing home to present a lesson plan that hopefully would be inspirational and instructional.

The night before I was to teach (I finally figured out what to wear—rust and yellow), I was worried about the kinds of poems I should read, what assignment I should give. In general I was experiencing the usual "night before" concerns and anxieties. Fortunately, a friend came by and dropped off Kenneth Koch's book, I Never Told Anybody: Teaching Poetry Writing in a Nursing Home (Vintage Books, 1978). I immediately began skimming the pages, then reading very quickly the first three or four chapters. I particularly enjoyed the chapter on "Quiet." As I ran across a favorite poem of mine, D.H. Lawrence's "The White Horse," I started to feel better about what to present to the group. A lovely poem, it describes such an intense quiet, such an intense personal moment through its simplicity of language and gesture:

The White Horse

The Youth walks up to the white horse to put
its halter on
and the horse looks at him in silence.
They are so silent they are in another world.

In past teaching situations with 5th and 6th graders I had used this poem—reading it aloud and then asking the class if they could remember a place, perhaps a secret one that was very quiet. Generally the assignment produced positive results; the students experienced how poetry can create a universal emotion or meaning through the concrete descriptions of gesture or location.

Also in Koch's chapter was the poem by William Carlos Williams, "Nantucket." Another world, a silent one, is created by the cataloguing of common objects found in a room:

Nantucket

Flowers through the window
lavender and yellow

changed by white curtains—
Smell of cleanliness—

Sunshine of late afternoon—
On the glass tray

A glass pitcher, the tumbler
turned down, by which
a key is lying—And the
immaculate white bed.

Lawrence's poem along with "Nantucket" appeared to be good choices, for they were immediate, accessible—and short.

Finally, a lesson plan began to develop. As a prelude to the actual assignment on writing about a quiet place, I would also read a few Theodore Roethke poems, such as "Child on Top of a Greenhouse," "Night Crow," and "Root Cellar." I hoped that these poems might shake loose an image of childhood, that the students would remember a place, such as a barn or a garden, which held an emotional significance that had been forgotten. And I believed that since the poems were short, they would be easier for the students to follow, easier for me to re-read and discuss.

Now, with my clothes laid out, my map and poems in my briefcase, I was prepared; I had a lesson plan! discuss everyone's expectations about poetry, read poems on childhood and silence, and listen to what each one had to say about poetry and childhood, about the quiet and personal moments in her past childhood experiences.

The next morning, ten minutes ahead of the Channel 5 camera-crew, I arrived at the Gila Pueblo Nursing Home. The women who were to participate in my workshop and to be on television were looking quite lovely. All of us were busy, getting ready for the cameras.

Since the class was scheduled to be held in the cafeteria, I had my five students sit around a medium-size, square table; I wanted to be certain the students could see me and one another, for I thought eye-contact would alleviate any problems the women might have with either sight or hearing.

After I had introduced myself and asked each one to introduce herself—where she was from, where she had lived—I then asked everyone what she liked about poetry. "The pretty words," "the sounds," "the way ideas flow together," "the pictures," "the way poetry rhymes"—were some of the answers.

I nodded and said, "Yes. Poetry does have 'pretty words,' 'sound and sense.' Poetry is emotional, personal." And I added, "Poetry can resemble common, everyday speech, and it can be mysterious—like the telling of a secret."

As a warm-up, I read the Roethke poems, especially the "Root Cellar," and asked if anyone would like to tell the group about a special place—a personal place, a secret spot. After each one had contributed some anecdote, some information, I then read out loud the two poems on silence, "The White Horse" and "Nantucket." I then started to question each member of the group about a place that was "so silent." I would ask, "Do you recall a particular location that was so silent you were in another world?" "A place all your own?" "What kinds of trees were there?" "What was the weather like?" "Was anyone with you?" I waited until each one had answered so that I could request each member to begin a poem with "I remember." Working one-on-one, I then repeated my questions and began to take dictation, editing as the speaker went along. Here are two edited responses:

I Remember

I remember
Our home was quiet.
My father and brothers
Playing in the woods.
It was O' so quiet.
— Mrs. North (86 years old)

I Remember

I remember
A lake and a boat,
My husband fishing.
It was so quiet.
No birds singing.
We just sat in the boat.
— Mrs. Snyder (64 years old)

After this exercise, I asked each member of the group to think back to a time when a certain activity would take place, for instance, the gathering of wood—or perhaps a walk home on a summer's day, or an afternoon of listening to the rain, or fishing on a hot day in July. I wanted to give the group an assignment that would elicit a silent, personal world, a moment full of reverence, a moment created by opposite sensations of hot and cold or of contrasting sounds—silence and noise.

A poem I hoped would be an appropriate model for this exercise was James Wright's "Arriving in the Country Again," from his Collected Poems (Wesleyan Press, 1974):

Arriving in the Country Again

The white house is silent.
My friends can't hear me yet.
The flicker who lives in the bare tree at the
field's edge
Pecks once and is still for a long time.
I stand in the late afternoon.
My face is turned away from the sun.
A horse grazes in my long shadow.

I thought that since all of the women had grown up and had lived for a long time in rural areas, they might relate to this poem's silence—its objects and location.

Next, I decided to read one more poem, which like the Wright poem, would be immediate and accessible; a poem that captures a small moment is "Summer Day" by Yuan Mei in Kenneth Rexroth's book of translations, One Hundred More Poems from the Chinese Love and the Turning Year (New Directions, 1970):

Summer Day

Reading in the heat of noon
I grow sleepy, put my head
On my arms and fall asleep.
I forget to close the window.
And the warm air blows in
and covers my body with petals.

From these two poems I anticipated my students would begin to understand that poetry is like telling secrets and that writing is a childlike pleasure in rediscovering the

forgotten, the familiar.

I began to question each one, asking if she remembered a time, such as lying in bed on a summer's day or walking into a silent house, or performing a routine chore early in the morning. As each one answered, I would ask even more questions. "What was the weather like?" "What was the season?" "The time of day?" "What trees were around you?"

One of the students, Mrs. Potter, kept apologizing that she couldn't "remember." However, she remembered well enough:

I Remember

I remember the the winter time.
The icicles hanging off the roof.
My bed felt nice and warm.
— Mrs. Potter (86 years old)

She even continued to talk about her life in the country. I asked more questions: "What activity did you like the most?" "Who was with you?" What was the weather like?" Here is her answer:

In the Country

I lived in the country.
I'd walk into the fields
Pick cotton or search
The ground for pecans.

The sunlight was bright and hot.

Another successful response to this exercise was this poem by Mrs. Snyder (64 years old):

Winter

I remember it was cold
Sometimes snowing and raining.
I remember the wooden floor,
The wind coming through the cracks.
Outside, pecan, cottonwood, mulberry trees.
When it was windy, the leaves would move.

Finally, Mrs. North, who had been quietly listening to everyone's story about childhood, began to talk about her days growing up on a farm. I asked if she recalled any particular chore she had to do. As she answered slowly and surely, I kept asking her questions about the weather, the season, the time of day. The edited version:

Early Morning

I remember we had a fireplace,
A back log. Outside, I picked up
The chips, scraped ashes off the coal.
Inside, with my apron-gathered chips,
I'd put paper in, start the fire.

Soon had a good fire.
My face would burn
While my back froze.

I praised the poem for its "openness," its naturalness, its sounds—"picked/chips," "scraped/start," and "coal/froze." I reiterated my belief that lyrical success in poetry happens when we speak openly, for poems are everyday speech—intensified.

By this time, the camera-crew was getting ready to leave to meet me at Globe High School, and the women were ready for a rest. Before I left, I complimented all the women on their poems, for each one was a success, each one was "true" in its emotion and corresponding descriptive details.

It was a "one-shot" hour-and-a-half workshop with only five women. But I have always wondered, when in the last three years, I have found myself on a cold day gathering wood, or fishing on a hot day, or walking in a pecan grove in spring, if those women remember me as much as I recall them and their poems, their stories, their eyes alive with the past.

On days when it is "o' so quiet," I remember, I remember.

LESS TESTING, MORE ACTUAL READING AND WRITING WOULD ENHANCE LEARNING

"A nationwide overemphasis on testing may be inhibiting children's growth in reading and writing," says Stephen Judy of Michigan State University, who recently took office as vice president of the National Council of Teachers of English. "If youngsters are to learn the first two R's," he says, "they must engage in frequent reading and writing, with constructive feedback from teachers."

Yet many parents, administrators, and media reporters are preoccupied with scores on standardized tests, observes Judy. "At all levels of education, testing is being used as a substitute for teaching. Testing creates the illusion that standards are being maintained and that something is being done about the problem of improving literacy. But little is being done over and above the testing. For example, state legislatures often mandate expensive testing programs but do not appropriate the money to correct the problem identified through the testing."

Judy believes that the means by which higher-level literacy skills are developed and measured are poorly understood by the American public. "Instead of just looking at test scores and report cards," he advises, "interested parents ought to ask about what their children are actually doing with language. Parents whose children read and write often can be confident that their youngsters are receiving quality education, and that their test scores will be acceptable as well."

ANOTHER JOURNEY THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS: NEW LENSES FOR OLD PROBLEMS

John S. Mayher

(Or, sometimes the long way around is the only way to get there.)

When Alice first goes though the looking-glass she finds—as she has earlier seen in Wonderland—a world where her previously established constructs don't work very well to account for even the most routine events of life. When she first meets the Red Queen, for example, she suddenly finds herself running as fast as she can but:

> The most curious part of the thing is, that the trees and the other things around them never changed their places at all: however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything. [And, when the Queen finally lets her rest, she observes that:] "in our country, you'd generally get to someplace else—if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing."
>
> "A very slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that."

While it is true that most of us in English teaching often feel that every time we open the school door we are in a looking-glass world where we are running fast to stay in place—particularly when we regard the stacks of student papers which seem to magically replenish themselves no matter how many we read—my reason for mentioning Alice's confusion is not to bemoan our fate. It is, instead, to point out that all of us view the world on the basis of our experience of it, that we use these experience-based constructs to make predictions about the future course of events, and, further, that these constructs always influence and frequently distort our ability to perceive the nature of the reality which surrounds us. We can't help but do so, of course, any more than Alice can help expecting to be under a different tree after running so fast and so long, but it is important both to be aware that we do so and to be prepared to change our constructs when new experience doesn't conform to our predictions.

Theories and Teaching:

Although I used the term constructs—derived from the work of George Kelly—to describe these structures of knowledge, belief, and perception, I could just as easily have used theories or hypotheses, because my major purpose today is to try to explode one of the prevalent misconceptions that severely limits the possibilities of curriculum change in schools: the belief of many teachers that theory has no direct relevance to their pedagogical problems and that what is really needed are practical answers to the question: What can I do on Monday? I am going to try to convince you—although I

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recognize that just by being here you are probably less in need of convincing on this point than most of your colleagues—that What can I do Monday? is always, in fact, answered on the basis of theory and indeed must be so answered.

This may seem paradoxical, but as the White Queen explains when Alice complains that:

> "One can't believe impossible things."
> "I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Surely it should be easy enough for all of us to believe at least one impossible thing after lunch.

The impossibility disappears like the Cheshire Cat—maybe or maybe not leaving a smile behind—when we see that all teaching decisions are based on the teacher's view of the world. How we view our subject determines what we see as problems and what we will accept as solutions to those problems. While many teachers may not recognize that these perceptions are theory based, and that, indeed, is part of the difficulty we face, they are no less so for being unrecognized. Unless one has a theory of spelling, then there are no spelling problems; without a theory of grammar, no participles can dangle; in the absence of a theory of literature, there are no plots or themes. And since every teaching activity is designed to solve a problem, it becomes crucially important to understand that every time we perceive a problem we do so on the basis of a theory or set of theories.

I will try to exemplify how this works shortly, but first I must admit that many of the theories that have been urged on teachers as panaceas for their difficulties certainly aren't—or at least aren't directly so, transformational-generative grammar being the most obvious case that I am familiar with. And, second, that even the most relevant theoretical insights need to be transformed through serious intellectual endeavor in the process of applying them to teaching activities. It may be that teachers are reluctant, or in some cases even unable, to make the appropriate translations. It may be that they have not been sufficiently helped by teacher educators and curriculum leaders to do so. But I am convinced that serious curriculum change requires an explicit dependence upon improved applications of relevant theories, and that those of us who are trying to promote such change must find ways of helping teachers learn to value, understand, and use theories. This is essential because to avoid doing so is to doom us to running fast and never getting anyplace, and because if teachers can't learn to apply new theories deliberately, no change at all is likely to happen in the classroom.

Type 1 vs. Type 2 Theories

Part of the reason this process is difficult, is that most of us operate most of the time--even in our professional lives—on the basis of what I will call Type 1 theories. These are the theories which we have largely built on the basis of our personal experience and the violations of which are so troubling to Alice. Our memories, like Alice's, don't permit us to "remember things before they happen," and since we tend to agree with the White Queen that "It's a poor sort of memory that only works

backwards," we compensate by assuming on the basis of our Type 1 theories that the future will be much like the past. While this is both normal and essential, theories of this sort usually have the weakness of being largely unconscious, unreflected upon, and relatively impermeable in the sense that they tend to make us try to have reality fit our theory rather than adjusting the theory to be better in harmony with a changed reality.

Type 1 theories in education are particularly difficult to penetrate because they tend to have been built on the experiences of teachers when they were students of the age they are teaching rather than on any later learning. When Alice discusses education with the Mock Turtle, he allows that he only took:

> ". . . the regular course."
> "What was that?" inquired Alice.
> "Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with," the Mock Turtle replied, "and then the different branches of Arithmetic, Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

For many teachers the kinds of Reeling and Writhing we teach and the way we teach them are more affected by our experiences as students than by any teacher preparation courses, district curricula, or in-service extravaganzas. This is true in part because we were usually relatively good Reelers and Writhers or we wouldn't be teaching these subjects, but mostly it is true because our own student experience defined the way education is 'spozed to be. Perhaps because we have never been through the looking-glass, nothing that has happened to us since has had much effect on our most basic assumptions about what kids are supposed to learn and how they are to learn it.

The problem with Type 1 theories in education is that they lead us too often to identify the wrong problems, to ask the wrong questions, and to come up with inadequate answers. This is principally true because they assume that the basic principles underlying our work are all givens and the only important questions remaining are of the What do I do Monday? (and How do I do it?) sort. This would be tolerable, I guess, if everyone were convinced that we are doing a terrific job, but . . .

Type 2 theories, on the other hand, while connected to personal experience, are more based on collective, public, and shared experiences than idiosyncratic ones. They are more likely to be both conscious and to have been consciously learned. They are more reflected upon, more explicitly worked out, and, perhaps most important, more open to change and modification on the basis of our own experience and that of others. Although Type 2 theories may be as strongly held and as fervently argued for as Type 1 theories, at least in principle they contain a commitment to both empirical verification and to revision or even abandonment on the basis of counter-examples.

We don't have very many fully worked out Type 2 theories which explain all the kinds of issues and phenomena we are concerned with as English educators, but that makes the need to shift from Type 1 to Type 2 theories as the source of our curricular decisions stronger rather than weaker. This is primarily true because it is only by attempting to develop and implement new theory based curricula with a Type 2 spirit of experimentation and revision that we can begin to close the gap between what we wish to achieve—our goals—and what we are actually accomplishing—our results.

One of the reasons we don't have very many adequate Type 2 theories in language education is that the complexities of the human mind and its language system as well as all of the multitude of influences that affect language development are just

so difficult to explain. But, ironically, one of the advantages of Type 2 theories is that they explicitly recognize both what they can and cannot explain, and they have specific mechanisms for attempting to gradually fill in the gaps in their explanations. They offer only hypotheses, not certainties, but it is only through formulating and testing hypotheses and re-formulating new ones that we are likely to ever understand more than we do now about why our pedagogical practices are likely (or unlikely) to lead to our desired goals.

To adopt a Type 2 approach to education requires a tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, however, which many teachers (and, indeed, most people) find highly uncomfortable. We do, to be sure, have to make teaching decisions, plan lessons, evaluate papers, and so forth on the basis of the best approximation we have of the way things work, but unless we recognize that we are employing tentative conclusions rather than eternal verities, the prospects for change and improvement are dim indeed.

When Alice first discovers "Jabberwocky" her first problem is merely to decode it—a problem she solves by holding it up to a mirror, which is a logical step in a looking-glass world. Once she has done so, however, she is still in a quandary, for what is she to make of:

> 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
> Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
> All mimsy were the borogoves,
> And the mome raths outgrabe.
>
> "It seems rather pretty," she said when she had finished it, "but it's rather hard to understand!" (You see she didn't like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.)

She is still puzzled by it when she runs across one of the world's great literary critics (and English teachers), Humpty Dumpty. Professor Dumpty has little tolerance for ambiguity and full confidence in his own Type 2 certainty and is prepared to definitively pronounce on any text. (He has earlier pointed out to Alice that: "When I use a word, . . . it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less. . . . The question is which is to be master—that's all.") When Alice, playing the dutiful if somewhat skeptical student, asks him to "tell me the meaning of the poem called 'Jabberwocky,'" he is fully prepared to reply.

> "Brillig means four o'clock in the afternoon—the time when you begin broiling things for dinner."
> "That'll do very well," said Alice: "and 'slithy'?"
> "Well, 'slithy' means 'lithe and slimy.' 'Lithe' is the same as 'active.' You see it's a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word.

As a good English student, Alice rapidly gets into the game, providing her own definition for wabe, but the danger here is not that Professor Dumpty is not clever or witty—because he surely is both, but that he seems so sure of himself and so arbitrary. (He is equally sure that he will be all right if he falls off the wall, and even Alice knows how wrong he is on that account.) It is precisely this impression of certainty which lets students allow teachers to interpret literature for them (if they don't get it from Cliff's notes), and this impression of arbitrariness which develops the view that only English teachers have the key to the poetic code and that mere students needn't even bother.

This attitude of certainty is bad enough in teaching students--particularly about literature which is notoriously "slithy" stuff--but even worse when it comes to thinking about the whys of English teaching: I'd like to spend the rest of my time with you this afternoon, therefore, briefly sketching four problems confronting English teachers and contrasting Type 1 and Type 2 analyses of them and solutions for them. The requirements of brevity will make some of the positions more caricatured than I'd like, but I'll invoke the noble tradition of Lewis Carroll to ask your forgiveness for that.

Vocabulary Development

The first problem I want to address is the frequently voiced complaint that students have inadequate vocabularies. This has correlates in complaints about low scores on ACT or SAT verbal aptitude tests, poor reading ability, and limited diction in writing.

One traditional way of trying to solve this problem is to teach vocabulary directly. Methods to do so usually involve giving students lists of words on which they are then tested weekly in a variety of ways: picking out synonyms, using the word in a sentence, writing a definition and so on. Some lip-service is paid to reading as a source of vocabulary enrichment, but, ironically, the controlled vocabulary used by publishers to ensure "readability" has meant that most school books retard rather than stretch student vocabularies. In this approach to teaching, little attention is usually paid to the role of talk and of writing as means of vocabulary growth.

This approach is usually based on a variety of Type 1 theories. The most fundamental is a kind of unexamined behaviorism which holds that kids learn words through direct instruction and practice which build the appropriate stimulus-response associations. A related theoretical assumption involves the idea that a diagnosed problem needs a direct instructional remedy. Although most people who have tried such approaches recognize their limited utility (such teaching/testing is one of the best examples I know of the kind of "learning" which is mastered for the quiz and forgotten by the time school is over for the day), they are often continued because they help convince everyone involved: teachers, students, administrators, and parents, that the school is "doing something" about the problem. They also provide a neat and precise record of grades which allegedly show whether or not the learning has occurred.

A Type 2 theory approach to the problem, on the other hand, would be based both on our recognition of the failure of current approaches and on our emerging knowledge of the mental lexicon we build as we acquire a language. Recent psycholinguistic research has shown how fast and how naturally we learn words when we have a context for using them productively. The full possession of a word means controlling its grammar, phonology, and morphology as well as its meaning and a variety of subtle restrictions on its appropriate use. The development of such a full command is reached through a gradual process of refinement of successively close approximation of meaning and is arrived at only through an active process of language use in which the word is needed to fit the situation rather than through creating a situation (or a sentence) to fit the word. This process begins at the earliest stages of language acquisition as when children learn to stop overgeneralizing daddy, which often first seems to mean adult male (a potential source of some embarrassment for mom and dad alike) and continues through the process of gradually refining the meanings of technical terms like atom or cell.

The crucial pedagogical implication of current Type 2 theories of the lexicon is that words are learned indirectly in the context of a rich environment of active

language use when they are needed for some other purpose, and the challenge to us as teachers is to find teaching activities that indirectly promote vocabulary development. These include reading and listening, of course, but most crucially they center on the production of language in talk and writing. Since the goal of vocabulary development is the enrichment of the student's repertoire of words which can be used appropriately, we must recognize that the words will never be really needed—and therefore will never become part of the student's permanent lexicon—unless they are acquired in a context where the concepts they express are needed. If the ideas become important, and are talked about and written about, the words will be learned.

We must, of course, help students (and parents and administrators) see how this process works as well and we must develop better—if probably indirect—means of assessing vocabulary development so that all parties can see that it is happening. And we must look to our Type 2 theoretical frame to help us evaluate our efforts. The one role that does seem left for direct instruction in vocabulary is a new approach to traditional practice: that of teaching derivational morphology. To be consistent with psycholinguistic research, however, such an approach should not be directed to teaching new words as such, but to show students that the lexicon they already have has given them a flexible system for creating and understanding words which relate to those they already know and that when they learn a new word they are, in a sense, learning a whole family of related words as well. Helping students recognize the power of the language system they already possess and giving them confidence in their ability to use it productively is one of the few areas where direct language teaching can pay off.

Reading Literature

A second problem I'd like to address is the frequently expressed concern that students don't read very well, and specifically that they don't read literature well. The recent national assessment shows that students can read well for facts, but can't make inferences or interpretations well at all. Related to this, of course, is the fact that students don't read enough literature either in school or, even more important, on their own.

Part of the difficulty with this "problem" is that of the theoretical perspective through which it is defined. Although there are many sources for the current definition of this problem, the two most significant, although somewhat in conflict, are the kinds of reading tests that are used to assess student reading achievement and the ways literature is taught to teachers in many graduate English departments. The first, resulting in part from the failure of English teachers to understand and confront our colleagues in reading, has led to an overemphasis on teaching and testing for literal comprehension. This has some justification in the reading of non-fictional prose although even there inference skills and the ability to see the forest rather than just the trees are important goals. In the testing of literature, however, concentration on "facts," like where Silas buried the money or who whitewashed Tom Sawyer's fence, is too often overemphasized at the expense of helping students determine why Silas felt he had to bury it or how Tom got his friends to do the work.

This is often compounded with the student perception that only teachers have the keys to unlock the secret meanings of literature. This second source of the problem often results from teachers doing to students what their professors had done to them; that is, insisting on a single "correct" interpretation of literary works. The student is often confronted, therefore, with the recognition of an orthodox interpretation derived from the teacher. The effect of either—or, more usually, of

both—is to implicitly tell students that they are incapable of determining the meaning of literary texts through individual effort and that they should concentrate on the "facts" and wait for the teacher to provide the interpretation. The two misleading or misapplied theories—of the centrality of literal meaning derived in part from the "decoding" emphasis of the reading teacher and of the possibility of an orthodox reading of a text derived mostly from the now old "new" criticism—have therefore been partly responsible for the kinds of teaching practices that have created the "problem."

A different theoretical basis for the reading of literature may provide a better approach to teaching it. This theoretical stance, called the transactional theory of literature by Louise Rosenblatt, one of its pioneers, is built around the observation that each reader's "transaction" with a text is somewhat idiosyncratic. As we read literature—or, in fact, anything else—we are engaged in a process of meaning-making in which the words on the page are interpreted on the basis of our individual experiences which are in turn colored by our socio-cultural status, our personalities and beliefs, and our linguistic capacities. This process is clear to everyone in the theatre, where it is obvious that directors and actors must have their own vision of the text and its meaning—Olivier's Hamlet is not Burton's or Gielgud's or Williamson's. But its reality and validity are less often recognized or exploited in the classroom, although most teachers know that the Huck Finn that eighth graders read is not the same as that of 11th graders or as theirs.

The reality of reading literature is that the experience of a text is a private, personal transaction between reader and text. It is the private nature of the experience that has led Northrop Frye to argue that literature cannot be taught directly. What teachers can do, however, is to help students enrich and extend their capacities to make meaning from texts, but they must do so initially by sincerely recognizing the personal validity of the meaning that each student has made from the text. Sharing such reader responses, exploring their sources both in the text and the reader, and moving toward the achievement of the kind of loose consensus which recognizes the inevitability of some diversity of interpretation but insists on making readings which are at least consistent with the text, provides an effective classroom process. It directly involves the student's meaning-making powers by requiring the articulation of his or her response in talk or in writing. And by legitimizing the student's central role in the process of interpretation, it can provide a basis for growing student confidence in their ability to read literature on their own, which is a necessary prerequisite for doing so.

The teacher's role is crucial but essentially indirect in the sense that the teacher no longer serves as the ultimate judge of literary interpretation, but rather serves as questioner, prober, skeptic, and discussion leader whose goal is to help the students' deepen their own responses without imposing his or her own upon them. To achieve this kind of classroom requires considerable re-education and practice for students and teacher alike because all parties are likely to be quite comfortable with the traditional, more clear-cut assignment of interpretive power. Treating literary texts as the objects of Type 2 theoretical inquiry in which hypotheses are proposed and tested, ambiguities are welcomed and explored, and all readings are viewed as the tentative products of fallible readers is hard for many to accept. But until we accept it, literature will remain the exclusive preserve of its elite priests and acolytes who will continue to deny access to texts to all but their most devoted followers.

Correctness in Writing

Still a third problem confronting English teachers is the complaint that students don't write well, by which is meant that they spell poorly, punctuate badly, and have poor command of grammar and usage. (I'll get to what I consider real writing problems next.) In the last several years this complaint has developed greater urgency as students (and, by implication, schools and teachers) have been tested on their knowledge of these matters. This is not the place to speculate on why Americans are so obsessed with such things, particularly with spelling; one of the questions I am determined to answer some day is how spelling came to be associated with intelligence in this country. But I digress.

While the reality of such "problems" is indisputable for some students, the traditional solution of attempting to directly confront the problem by means of extensive drills and exercises in grammar just doesn't work to change the way kids write, as research study after research study has demonstrated since the turn of the century. And, sadly for those teachers who have spent endless hours circling and annotating every error they can find on student papers, such extensive correcting of student work doesn't have much effect either.

The urge for a direct attack on such problems is understandable, and the tenacity of grammar teaching in the face of both experiential and research based counter-evidence seems to spring mostly from a confusion of correlation with causation, partly from the same kind of unconscious behaviorism which underlies much of American education, and, importantly, from the genuine conviction of parents and teachers (and students, too), that their own personal successes (or even more commonly their failures) as writers have depended upon their knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of grammar. The correlation/causation confusion is based usually on the fact that grammar came relatively easily to most teachers, and since they were often learning grammar as they were learning to write, they have assumed that it was a causative factor in their success. Conversely those who have or have had problems with writing have often believed that where they went wrong was in not learning enough grammar.

Type 2 theories of the processes of composing and of language development bear directly on this problem and give promise of a more adequate definition of and solution to these problems. One of the most striking findings of recent composing process research was Perl's discovery that the basic (unskilled) writers she studied were excessively worried about correctness. On an average by the time they reached the third word of the texts they were writing, they were stopping to wonder whether or not they were spelling words correctly, where the commas were supposed to be, and the like. They were hampered throughout their writing by trying to remember rules and maxims which in most cases they had either learned incompletely or were trying to apply incorrectly. The net effect was that they produced tortured texts without adequate development, clarity, or organization, which were also, ironically, still filled with errors.

When we look at the nature of the human language system and at how it is developed and used, two other striking realities emerge. The first is that all speakers of a language have control over an incredibly complex and powerful linguistic system which enables them to speak and listen. The "grammar" that enables us to do this, however, is a system which we are completely unconscious of in the process of language use. Each of you, as listeners, and I, as a speaker, have no conscious knowledge at this moment of what rules are being followed as I produce and you understand this sentence, and to try to be conscious of them would make it impossible

for the meaning exchange which is being attempted to take place. And that is just the point: control of a grammatical system is developed as a means to the end of being able to express one's own ideas and comprehend the ideas of others, and it happens naturally and unconsciously as (or if) we find ourselves in increasingly complex linguistic environments.

The first solution to the grammar problem, therefore, is to provide students with the richest language environment possible; one filled with multiple opportunities for purposeful talk and writing, as well as reading and listening. As a correlate to this, it is crucially important to help student writers see that while proper use of the formal features of the written language is important, it is so because it facilitates communication and that their first priority (and ours) should be on shaping their meanings. There is little point for either writer or reader in an impeccable paper that says nothing.

The first solution—that of a rich language environment—is essential for developing the "ear" for the written language which is the primary basis for making appropriate language choices and for catching errors after they have been made in an early draft. Composing process research shows that editing can be separated from the processes of drafting and revising which make up the primary meaning-making and shaping aspects of writing: Students can learn to develop and trust their own sense of language through reading their own work aloud, sharing it with their peers, and looking to the teacher as a supporter or coach of their attempts to improve a paper while it is still in process.

This last is an important point because it suggests one of the reasons why extensive teacher annotations of error have been largely ineffective: they have come long after the paper has been finished and when the problems the student may have recognized—however dimly—while composing the text have long since disappeared from consciousness. If editing annotations are to be useful they must be made during rather than after the process of composing, and they will be most helpful of all if they can be framed in terms of assisting the writer's effort to communicate to a reader rather than seen, by the writer, as a set of arbitrary and irrelevant demands which only English teachers really care about.

The second solution to the "grammar problem," therefore, is to seek to develop metalinguistic awareness only in the context of helping the student writer more effectively express and communicate his or her ideas. This is unlikely to happen, of course, if students aren't writing purposeful (to them) papers to audiences who show more interest in what they are saying than how they are saying it. And, that, finally, is the ultimate source of solution to all sorts of writing problems.

Power in Writing

Indeed much of what I've just said relates equally to the solution of the other major types of complaints about student writing: that they don't write clearly, coherently, powerfully, persuasively, and so on. While this, too, is often true enough, one important causative factor in this regard is that students simply don't write enough in school. The responsibility for this rests on the whole faculty of the school, which is why I am spending most of this year working with many of you to help you to encourage the use of writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum. I won't spend any more time on that issue today except to point out that there is no way that students will learn to write in all the modes of writing they will need unless the whole faculty of a school makes them write frequently. It isn't easy to get that to happen, as I know very well, but try we must.

The particular aspect of the development of effective writers that I want to focus on as the last problem is the common view that writing skills develop from small units to large ones. This approach, which I have sometimes called the bottom-up strategy, operates on the basis of a Type 1 theory which appears to maintain that one must be able to write a good sentence before one can write a good paragraph, a good paragraph before three paragraphs, three before five and so on. A frequent pedagogical corollary to the bottom-up approach is the insistence that students can't write good paragraphs, for example, unless they know how to identify and explicitly write topic sentences, and know several paradigms for paragraph development such as the use of supporting details, and of comparison/contrast. The analytical theories of rhetoric upon which such pedagogies have been built are not what I am criticizing here, nor am I suggesting that they never have a place in writing instruction. My criticism is really of the psychological theories which have influenced their use in the process of writing instruction. These theories have implied that writers first have a form in mind before they have determined what they have to say, and, that much the same as is believed to be true of grammar, the best way to achieve rhetorical control is to have a set of rules or principles in mind while you are composing.

While I do believe that some aspects of rhetorical analysis can be helpful in the revision process--particularly with relatively skilled writers who are attempting to meet a variety of rhetorical demands--burdening unskilled and beginning writers with prescriptions about sentence types, where topic sentences belong, and how arguments are built puts the structural cart before the meaning-making horse and encourages student writers to believe, once again, that no one much cares what they say as long as their form is appropriate. Until school writing becomes meaningful enough to the writer that he or she cares about its rhetorical effectiveness, there is little point in trying to have students master various rhetorical strategies.

My main criticism of the bottom-up approach, however, is based on those theories of language which show that when language is used for communication, what we produce are whole ideas. These may be short or long, but they always have some sense of completeness even if they are not grammatically complete. Even in writing, people rarely try to write a single paragraph, as a paragraph, except in school. Limitations of space may sometimes require us to limit ourselves to a paragraph, but the point is that in real communication situations, it is the meaning being transmitted that determines the form and the extent of the piece rather than the reverse. It is usually the case that younger writers write shorter pieces than older ones, but even then this is more the result of limits on the complexity of their messages, rather than on their capacities to write longer pieces if what they have to say demands it.

The sentence errors produced by inexperienced writers are more often than not errors of omission (producing fragments), which can usually be corrected by having to read one's own work aloud, or of punctuation, which can only be mastered through discovering the kinds of message confusion they cause. Punctuation exercises with others' work, or limiting writers to producing single sentences first before allowing them longer pieces, have been continuously ineffective. In fact the only times we read, use, and therefore learn to control more complex sentence forms are when we have complex ideas to express. Providing the occasion for complex thoughts to be communicated will be far more valuable than any other means of improving control of complex structures.

Conclusion

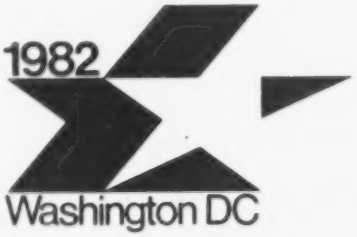
The larger generalizations that I would hope you would ponder as a result of this talk spring directly from theories of language which have emphasized the fact that

structure is used to express meaning and that meaning-making is the driving force for mastering structures, and from a conception of language learning that shows that the most significant occasions for language development are those where language is a means rather than the end of learning. The pedagogical implications of these views, stated most simply, are that there are very limited possibilities for the direct teaching of language skills and that the long way around is often the only way to get to where we want to go.

Further, I hope I have shown that since teaching decisions are directly rooted in theory, and the problems facing English teachers have not been caused by the fact that we have too much theory and not enough practical pedagogy, but rather have arisen because we have too many Type 1 theories at the root of our teaching. We don't need fewer theories, we need better applications of the best theories we have . As teachers, curriculum leaders, and teacher educators, we must all learn to adopt a Type 2 theoretical attitude toward our own teaching, we must strive to adapt and apply the best available theories to our pedagogical problems, and where appropriate we must further the development of new theories by articulating more clearly the problems we face so that solutions to them can be found. Only by doing so can we escape the looking-glass world.

Convention News

72nd Annual Convention
Washington, D.C.
November 19-24, 1982



WASHINGTON, D.C., TO BE SCENE
OF 72nd NCTE CONVENTION IN NOVEMBER

"Let the best of the past inform the future" will be the theme for the 1982 Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, scheduled for Washington, D.C., November 19-24. The 72nd Convention of NCTE will be held at the Washington Hilton Hotel during the week before Thanksgiving.

"As much as possible, we're going to take advantage of the resources of the Washington scene," said NCTE President-elect William F. Irmscher, University of Washington, who chaired the convention planning committee. Plans include a workshop by members of the staff of the Folger Shakespeare Library, a film program at Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and a session at the Library of Congress.